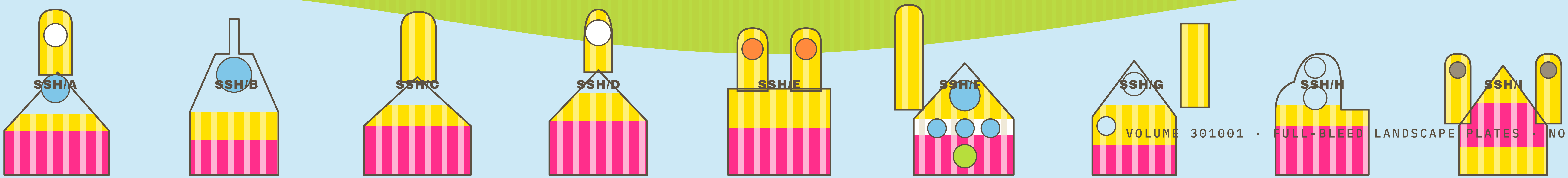
SUPER SUPERGRAPHICS

AN ATLAS OF NINE SUPER SCHOOL HOUSES AND TWELVE SPECULATIVE PLACEMENTS ON THE ISLAND OF MANHATTAN

SURJAN, WITH THE AID OF CLAUDE · SURJAN SUPER SCHOOL, PUBLISHER



VOLUME 301001 · FULL-BLEED LANDSCAPE PLATES · NO BLACK

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

SEVEN ANTECEDENTS FOR AN OVERSCALED CIVIC SCHOOL

1964

THE SEA RANCH

BARBARA STAUFFACHER SOLOMON · SONOMA COUNTY

Swiss hard-edge lettering, arrows and circles painted at building scale on the interiors and exteriors of MLTW's weathered-wood wedges. Executed with two house painters in three days. Life magazine names the result SUPERGRAPHICS.

1966

MOONRAKER ATHLETIC CENTER

B. STAUFFACHER SOLOMON · THE SEA RANCH

Stripes cross walls, floor and ceiling without acknowledging the corner. Optical effects destroy the architectural plane and explode the rectangular room.

1968

MEXICO 68

LANCE WYMAN · MEXICO CITY

A whole city given one radiating line-figure: signage, pictograms, pavement, kiosks. Graphics become the wayfinding infrastructure of an urban event.

1972

LEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS

VENTURI SCOTT BROWN IZENOUR

The decorated shed. The sign is bigger than the building and is read at 35 mph. Communication over space; the facade becomes a billboard with a door.

1984

LOS ANGELES OLYMPICS

DEBORAH SUSSMAN · SUSSMAN/PREJZA

Magenta, vermillion, aqua and chrome yellow on scaffold towers, tents and nylon. Sussman: the idea was not that it was big but that it was BIGGER THAN THE ARCHITECTURE.

1994

THE PLAYGROUND CARPET

POST-OLYMPIC CIVIC RESURFACING

Colour leaves the wall and floods the ground. The plaza becomes a figured field that children read with their feet before they read the building.

NOW

SUPER SUPERGRAPHICS

SURJAN SUPER SCHOOL

The supergraphic is no longer applied to the building. The building is extruded FROM the supergraphic — gable, oculus, stack and stripe are one operation. Then it is overscaled until the city has to move.

OPERATIVE DEFINITION FOR THIS VOLUME — A SUPERGRAPHIC IS A FIGURE THAT REFUSES THE EDGE OF ITS SURFACE.

A SUPER SUPERGRAPHIC IS A FIGURE THAT REFUSES THE EDGE OF ITS CITY.

THE FIVE PERMITTED FIELDS

CHROME YELLOW	**MAGENTA**	**SKY**	**MEADOW**	**WARM TAUPE**
#FFE000	#FF2E8B	#7FC6E8	#B7DE3C	#5C5142
FLOOD · ROOF · FINIAL	WALL · CARPET · THRESHOLD	OCULUS · WATER · GLAZING	GROUND FIGURE · PLAY	LINE · TYPE · SHADOW ONLY
FIELD 01 / 100%	FIELD 02 / 100%	FIELD 03 / 100%	FIELD 04 / 100%	FIELD 05 / 100%

NOTATION

- RIDGE / APEX
- OCULUS
- FINIAL DRUM
- STRIPE FIELD
- CARPET FIGURE
- EXISTING FABRIC
- WATER
- BLOCK DISPLACED

LINE WEIGHTS

- 0.7 · REGISTRATION
- 1.2 · GRID
- 2.0 · BUILT EDGE
- 3.4 · SUPERGRAPHIC EDGE
- 9.0 · CARPET STROKE

TYPE

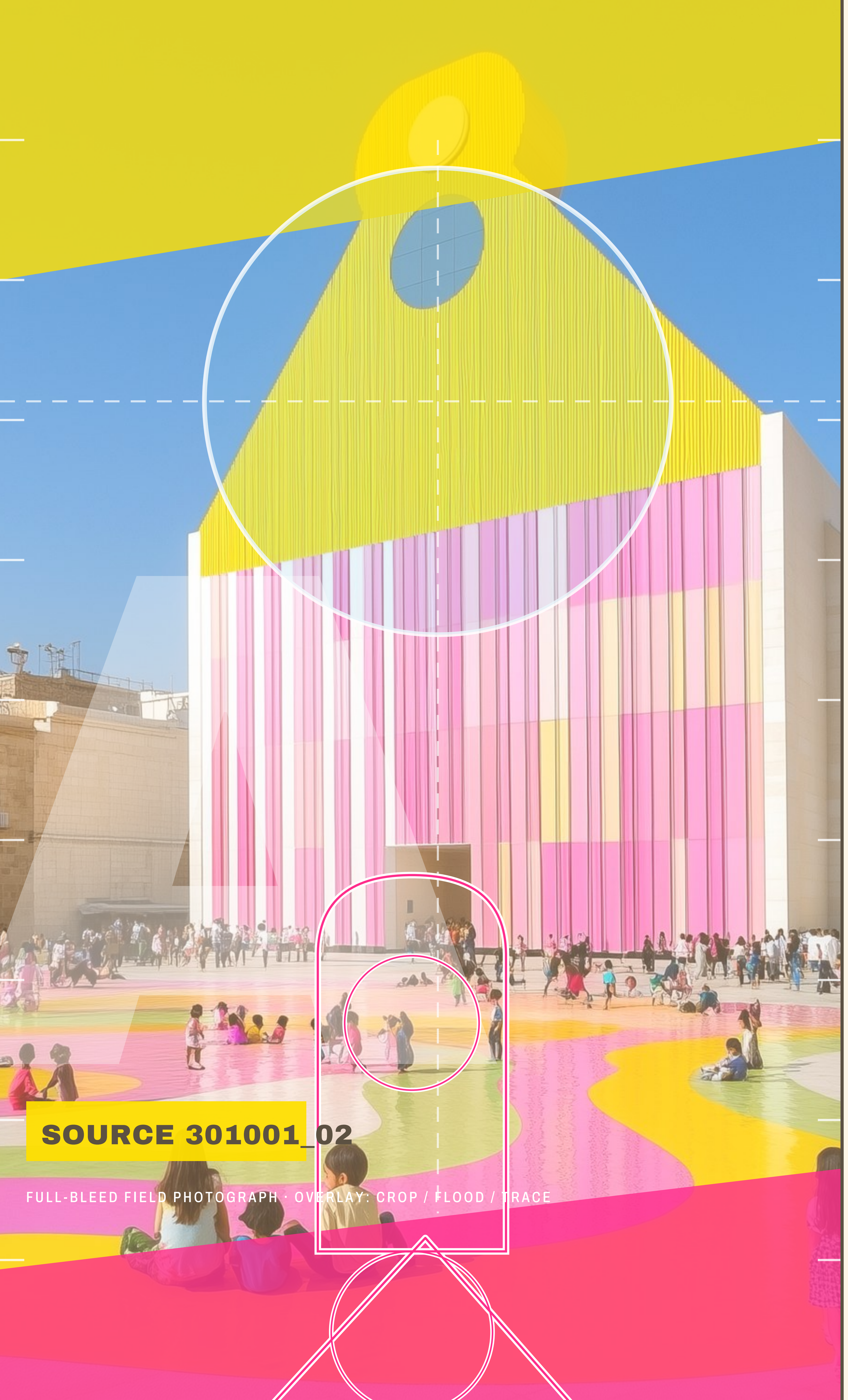
ARCHIVO BLACK — DISPLAY

ARCHIVO CONDENSED — FIELD NOTATION

IBM PLEX MONO — DATA / DIMENSION

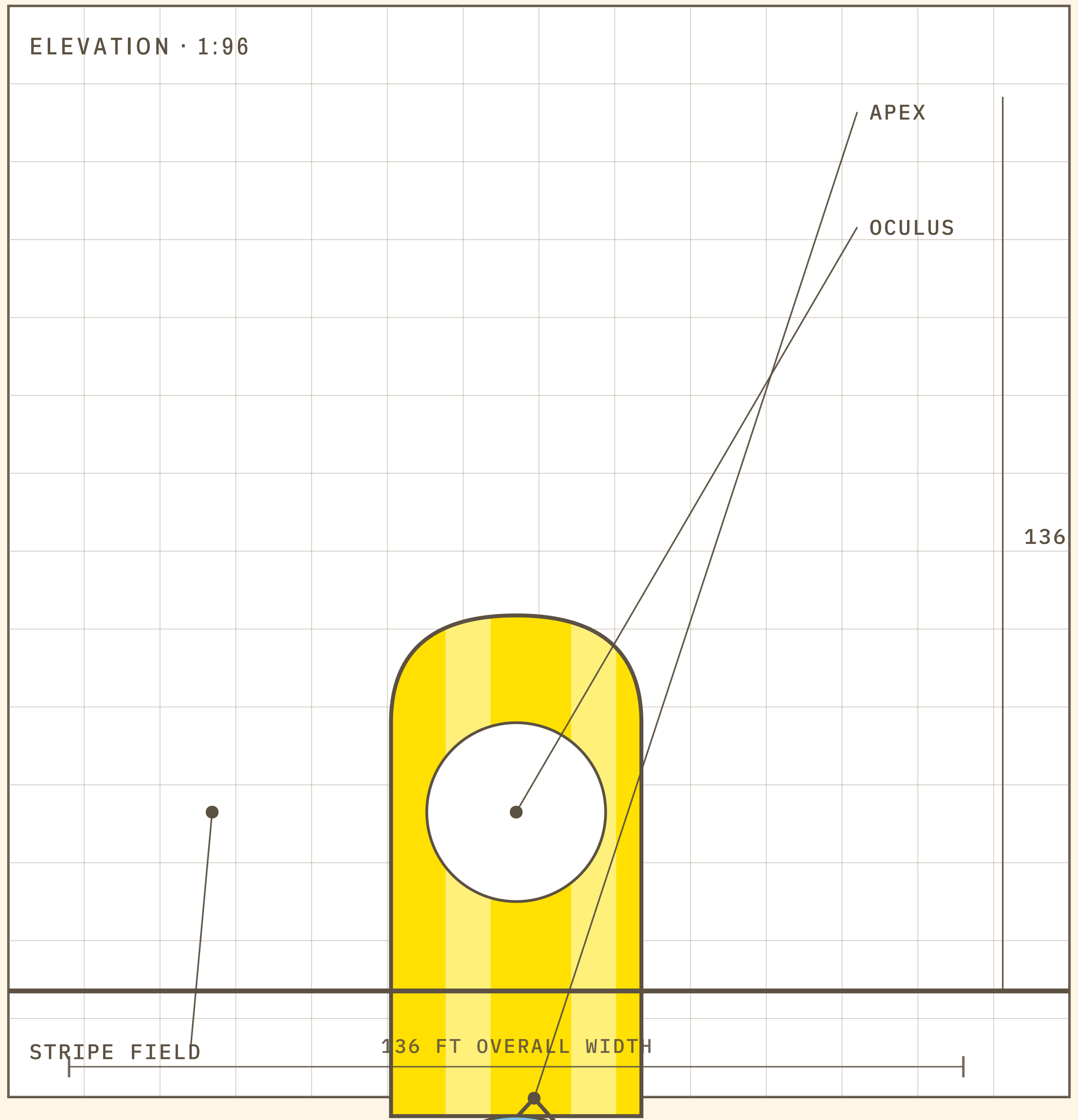
EB Garamond — argument and caption

NO BLACK IS USED ANYWHERE IN THIS VOLUME.



GABLE + OFFSET OCULUS FINIAL

ROOF PLANE 41° / FINIAL OFFSET +2 BAYS EAST



CHROMATIC DECOMPOSITION

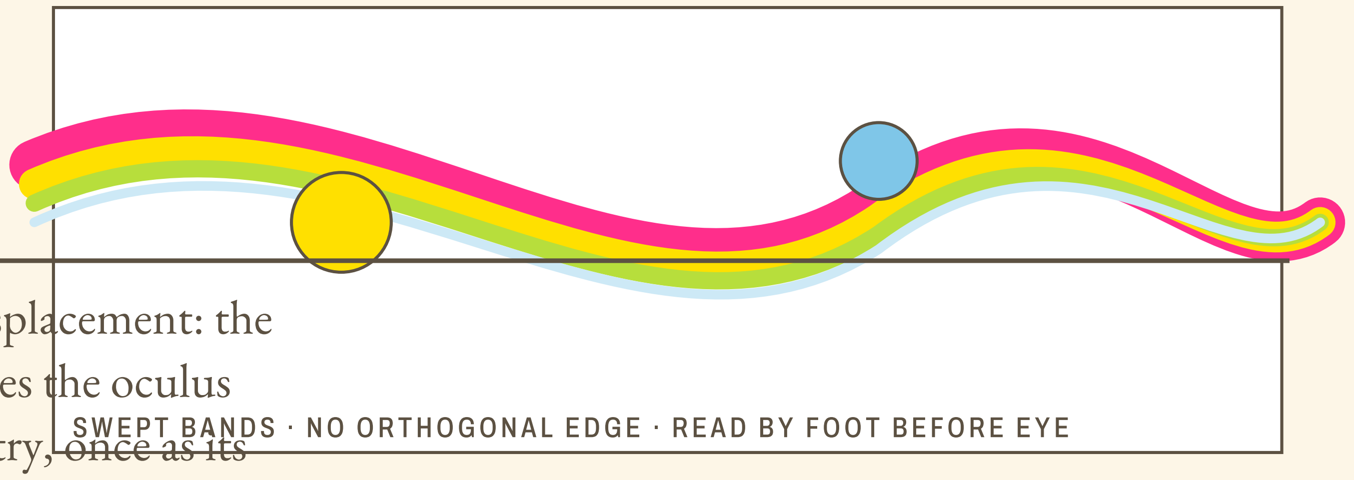
- 46% PINK STRIPE FIELD
- 34% CHROME FLOOD
- 14% WHITE INTERVAL
- 06% SKY OCULUS

TOTAL FIELD 100% · BLACK 00%

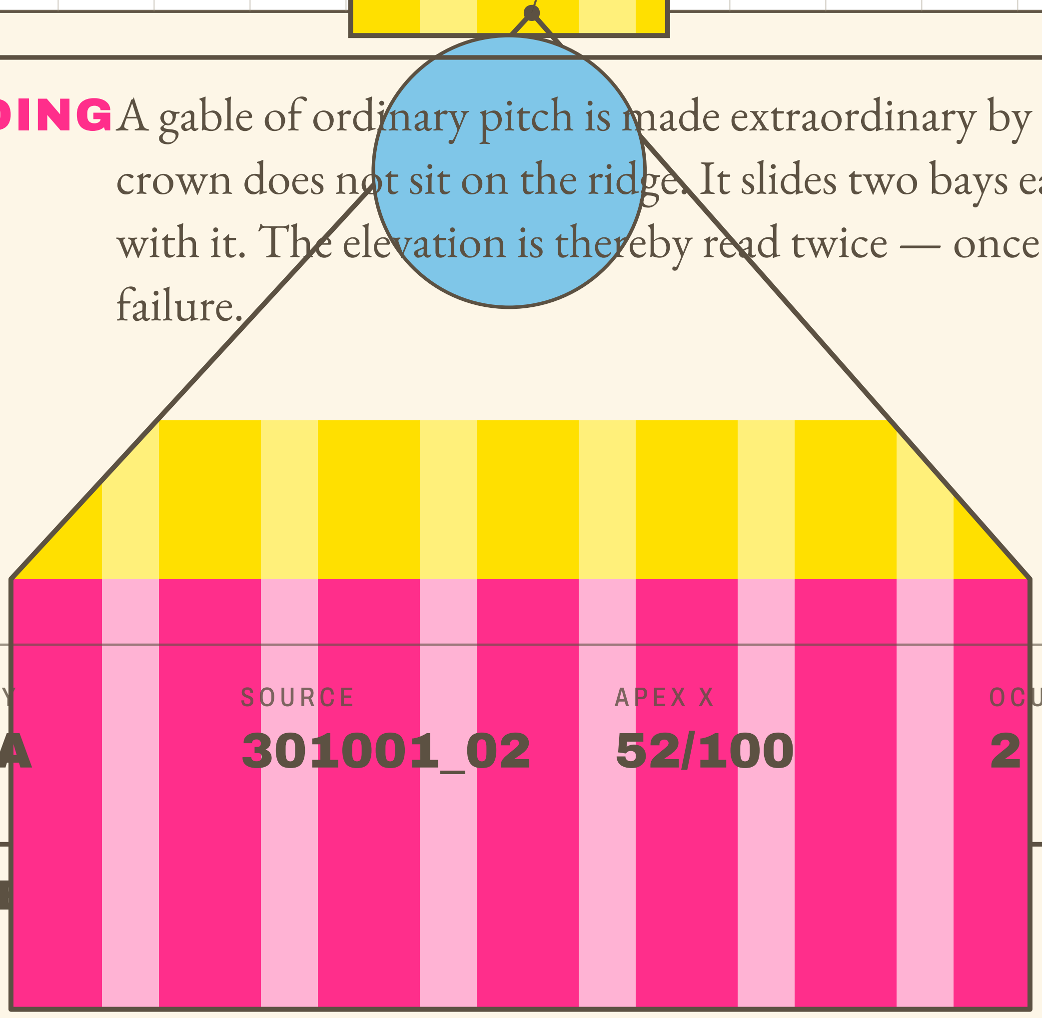
SUPERGRAPHIC OPERATIONS

1 CROP · 2 FLOOD · 3 SLIDE · 4 OVERSCALE

GROUND CARPET · FIGURE GEOMETRY



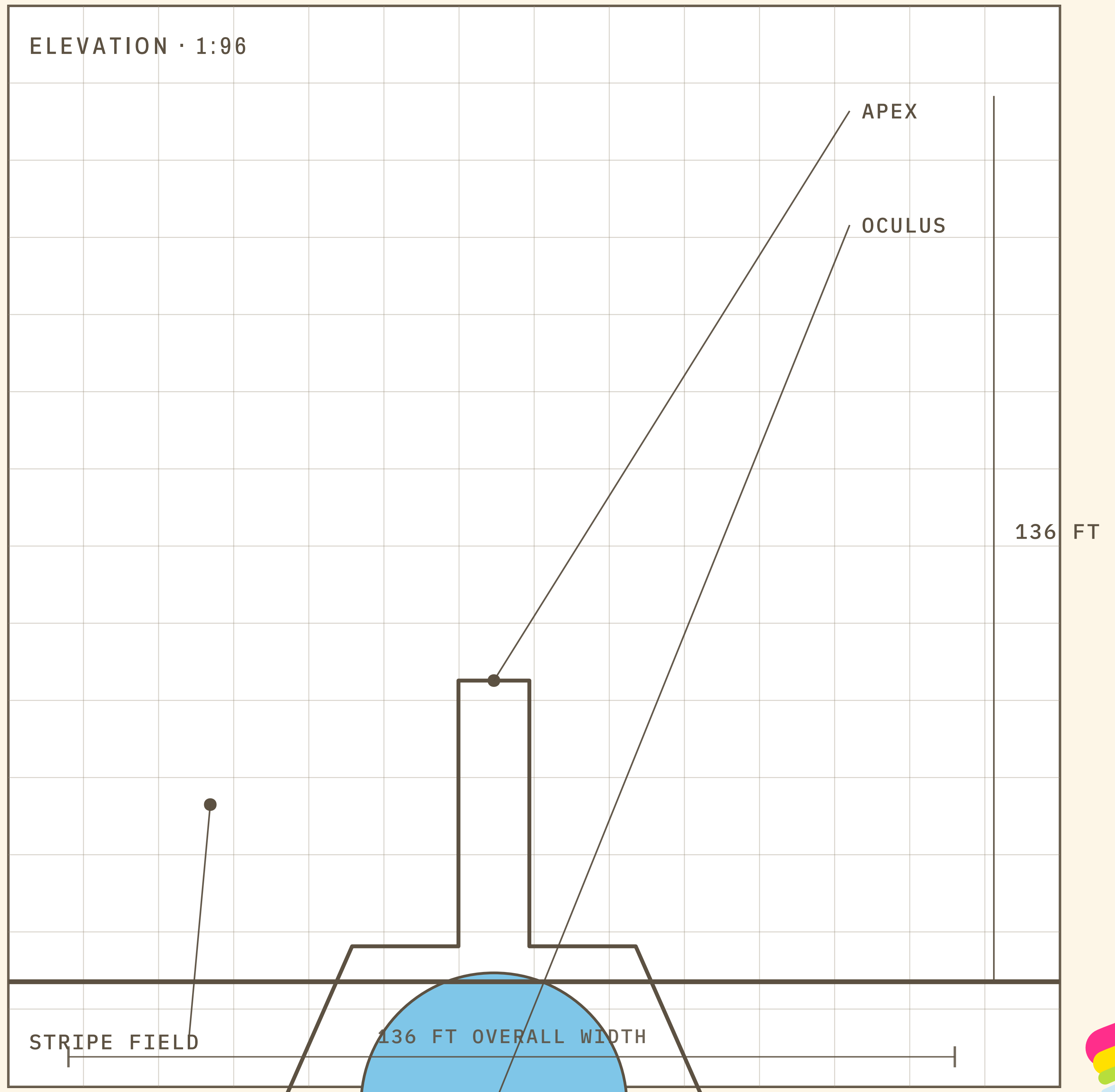
READING A gable of ordinary pitch is made extraordinary by a single displacement: the crown does not sit on the ridge. It slides two bays east and takes the oculus with it. The elevation is thereby read twice — once as symmetry, once as its failure.



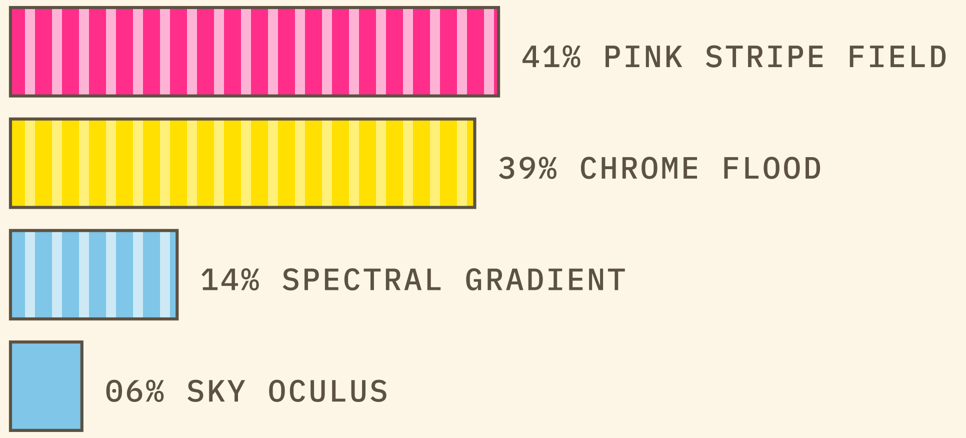
TYPOLOGY	SOURCE	APEX X	OCULI	FINIALS	FIELDS	BLACK
SSH/A	301001_02	52/100	2	1	4	0.00%

TAPERED TOWER + TWIN-PRONG NOTCH

TAPER 1:3.4 / NOTCH WIDTH 8 UNITS

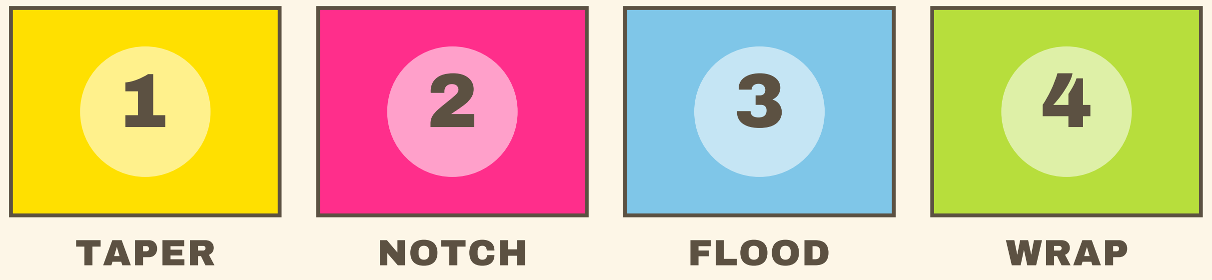


CHROMATIC DECOMPOSITION

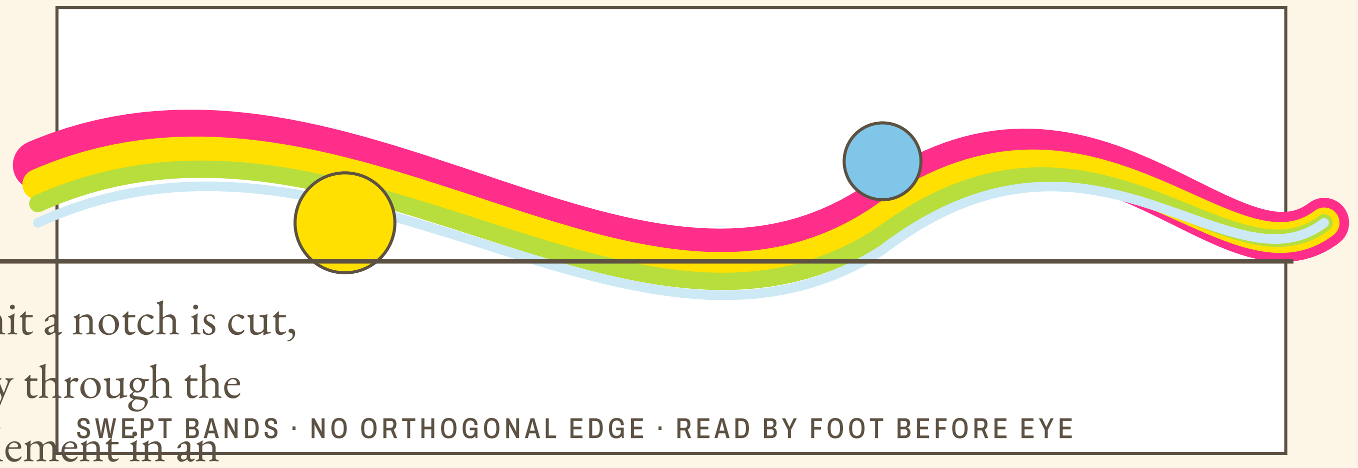


TOTAL FIELD 100% · BLACK 00%

SUPERGRAPHIC OPERATIONS



GROUND CARPET · FIGURE GEOMETRY



READING The tower flares downward like a poured thing. At the summit a notch is cut, splitting the mass into two prongs and admitting a strip of sky through the middle of the building. The oculus below is the only round element in an otherwise straight-edged figure.

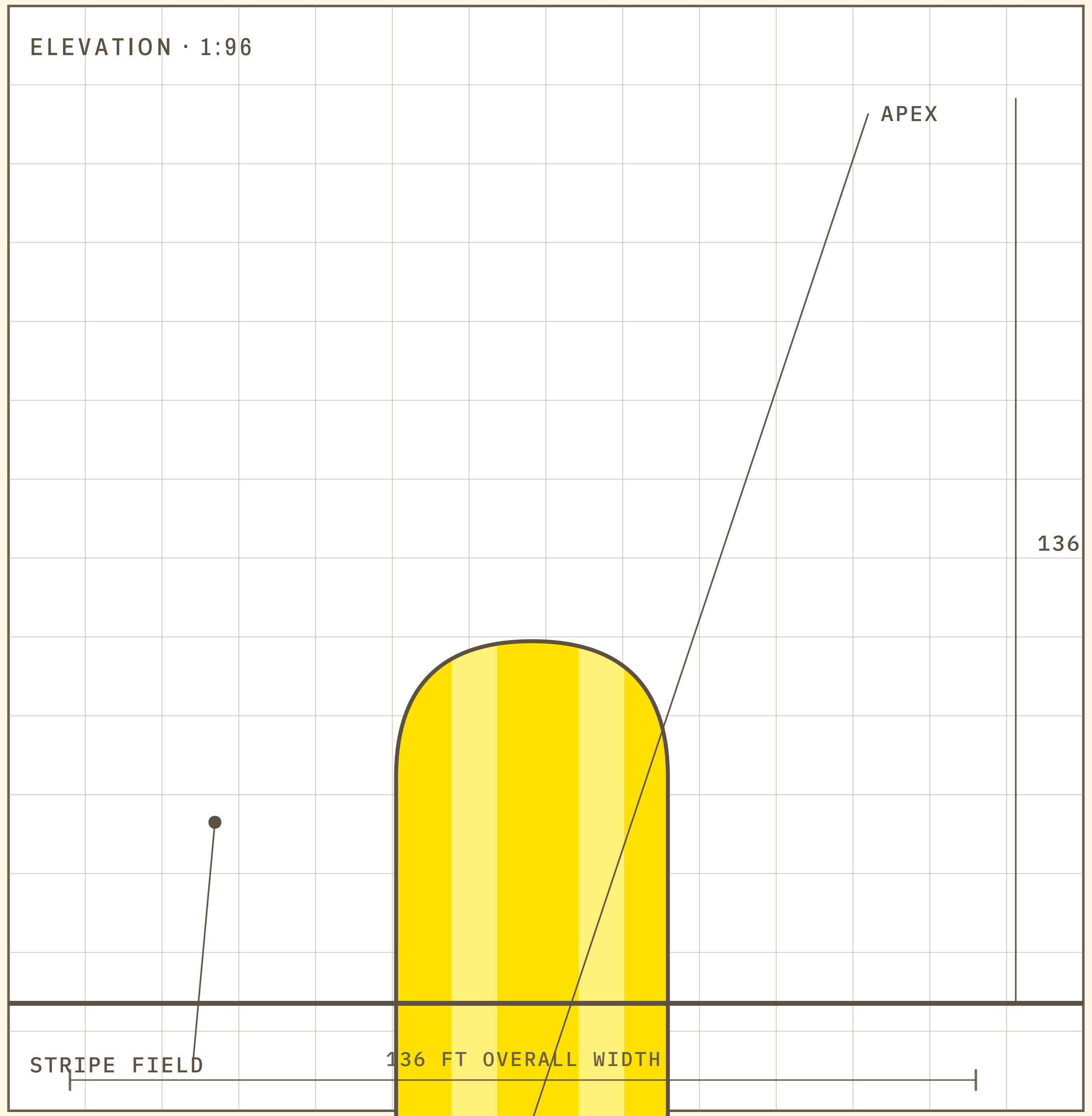
TYPOLOGY	SOURCE	APEX X	OCULI	FINIALS	FIELDS	BLACK
SSH/B	301001_03	48/100	1	0	4	0.00%

SOURCE 301001_04

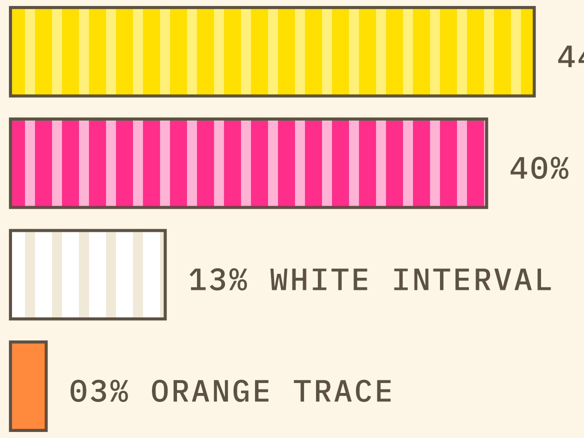
FULL-BLEED FIELD PHOTOGRAPH · OVERLAY: CROP / FLOOD / TRACE

CYLINDER RISING BEHIND GABLE

DRUM Ø 30 / RISES 40 ABOVE APEX



CHROMATIC DECOMPOSITION

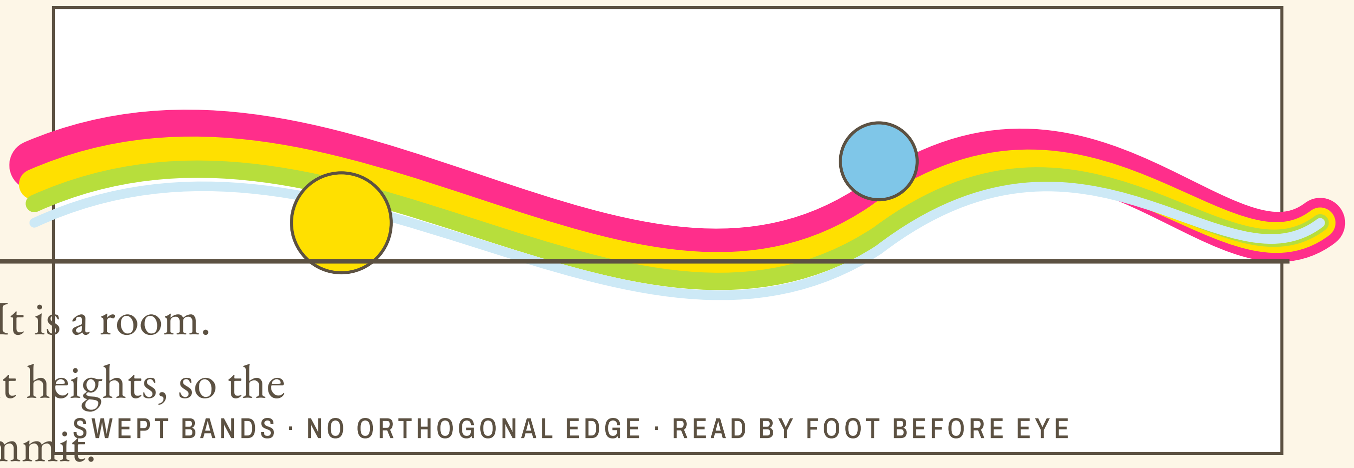


TOTAL FIELD 100% · BLACK 00%

SUPERGRAPHIC OPERATIONS

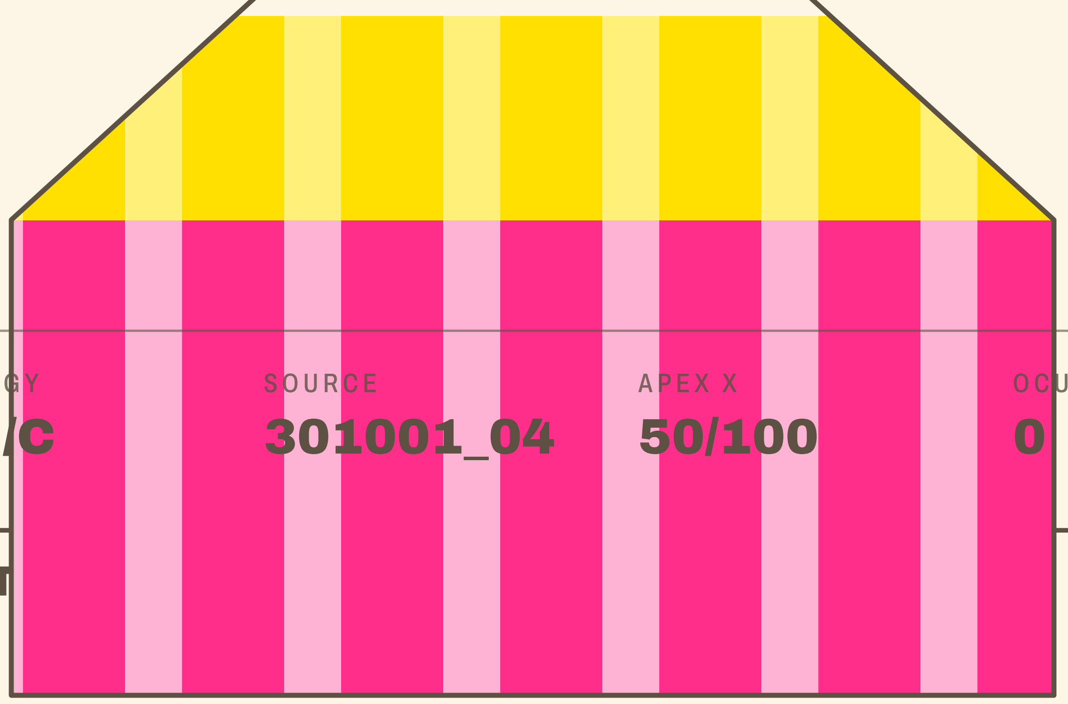
1	2	3	4
SPLIT	EXTRUDE	FLOOD	LIFT

GROUND CARPET · FIGURE GEOMETRY



SWEPT BANDS · NO ORTHOGONAL EDGE · READ BY FOOT BEFORE EYE

READING A cylinder rises behind the apex and refuses to be a chimney. It is a room. Two roof planes of unequal colour meet the drum at different heights, so the building reads as two houses that have agreed to share one summit.



TYPOLOGY	SOURCE	APEX X	OCULI	FINIALS	FIELDS	BLACK
SSH/C	301001_04	50/100	0	1	4	0.00%

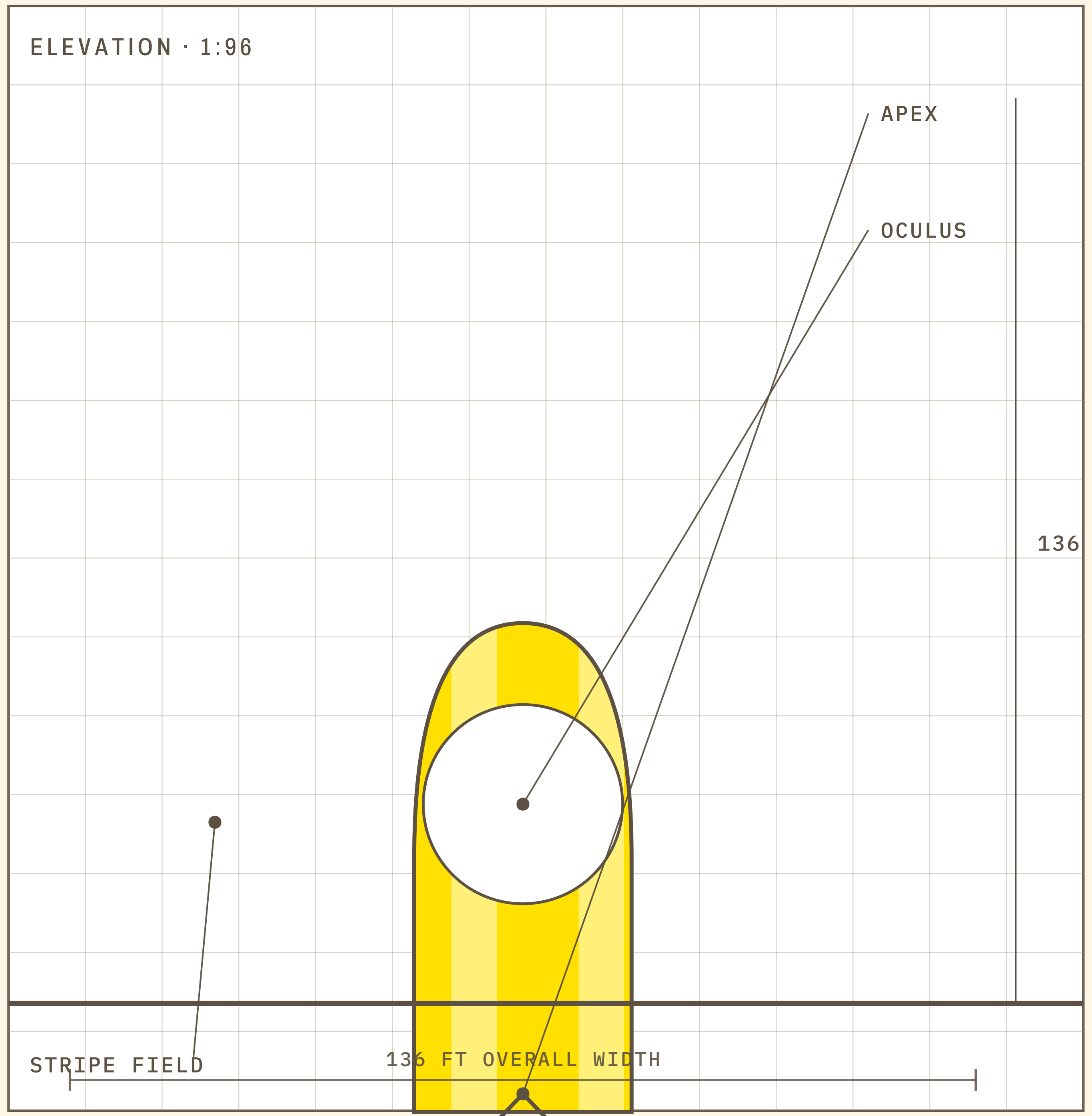
PLAT

SOURCE 301001_05

FULL-BLEED FIELD PHOTOGRAPH · OVERLAY: CROP / FLOOD / TRACE

RING FINIAL OVER STEEP GABLE

RING Ø 22 / OCULUS TRUE CENTRE



CHROMATIC DECOMPOSITION

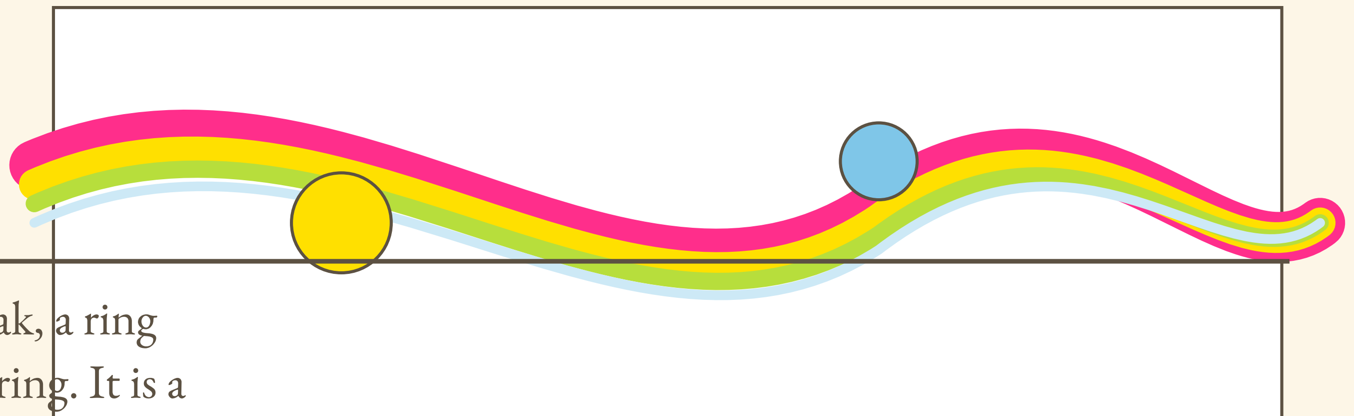
- 48% PINK STRIPE FIELD
- 36% CHROME FLOOD
- 10% WHITE OCULUS
- 06% STONE GROUND

TOTAL FIELD 100% · BLACK 00%

SUPERGRAPHIC OPERATIONS

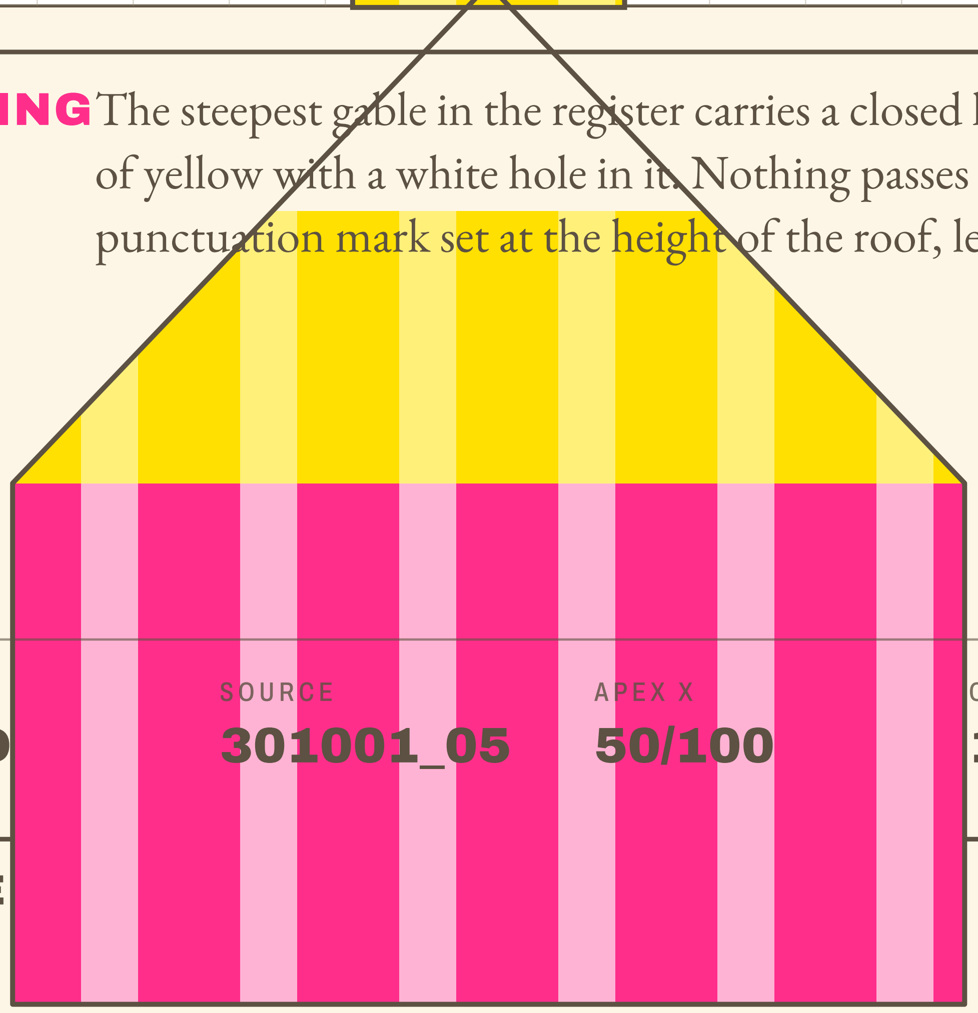
1. STEEPEN
2. RING
3. FLOOD
4. CROP

GROUND CARPET · FIGURE GEOMETRY



SWEPT BANDS · NO ORTHOGONAL EDGE · READ BY FOOT BEFORE EYE

READING The steepest gable in the register carries a closed loop at its peak, a ring of yellow with a white hole in it. Nothing passes through the ring. It is a punctuation mark set at the height of the roof, legible from four blocks away.



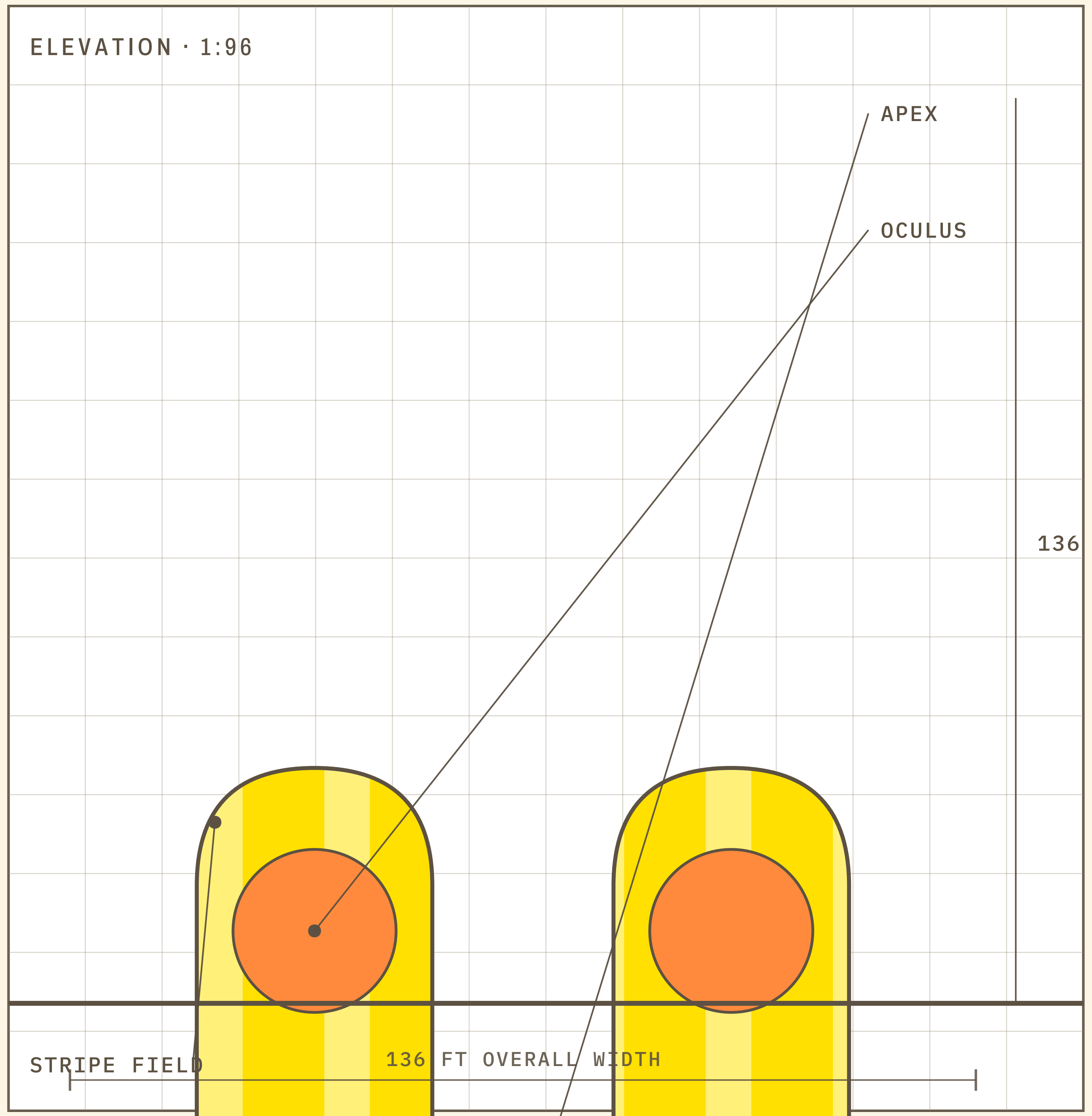
TYPOLOGY	SOURCE	APEX X	OCULI	FINIALS	FIELDS	BLACK
SSH/D	301001_05	50/100	1	1	4	0.00%

SOURCE 301001_06

FULL-BLEED FIELD PHOTOGRAPH · OVERLAY: CROP / FLOOD / TRACE

FLAT VOLUME + TWIN OCULUS STACKS

PARAPET FLAT / STACKS Ø 26 @ 46 O.C.



CHROMATIC DECOMPOSITION

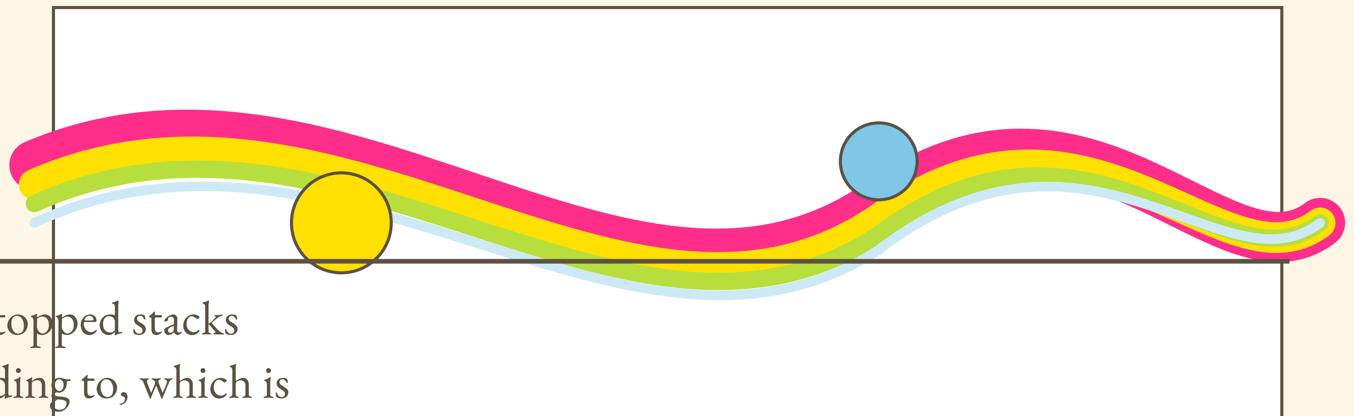
- 50% PINK STRIPE FIELD
- 30% CHROME FLOOD
- 14% WHITE STACK
- 06% ORANGE OCULUS

TOTAL FIELD 100% · BLACK 00%

SUPERGRAPHIC OPERATIONS

1 FLATTEN · 2 PAIR · 3 FLOOD · 4 STARE

GROUND CARPET · FIGURE GEOMETRY



SWEPT BANDS · NO ORTHOGONAL EDGE · READ BY FOOT BEFORE EYE

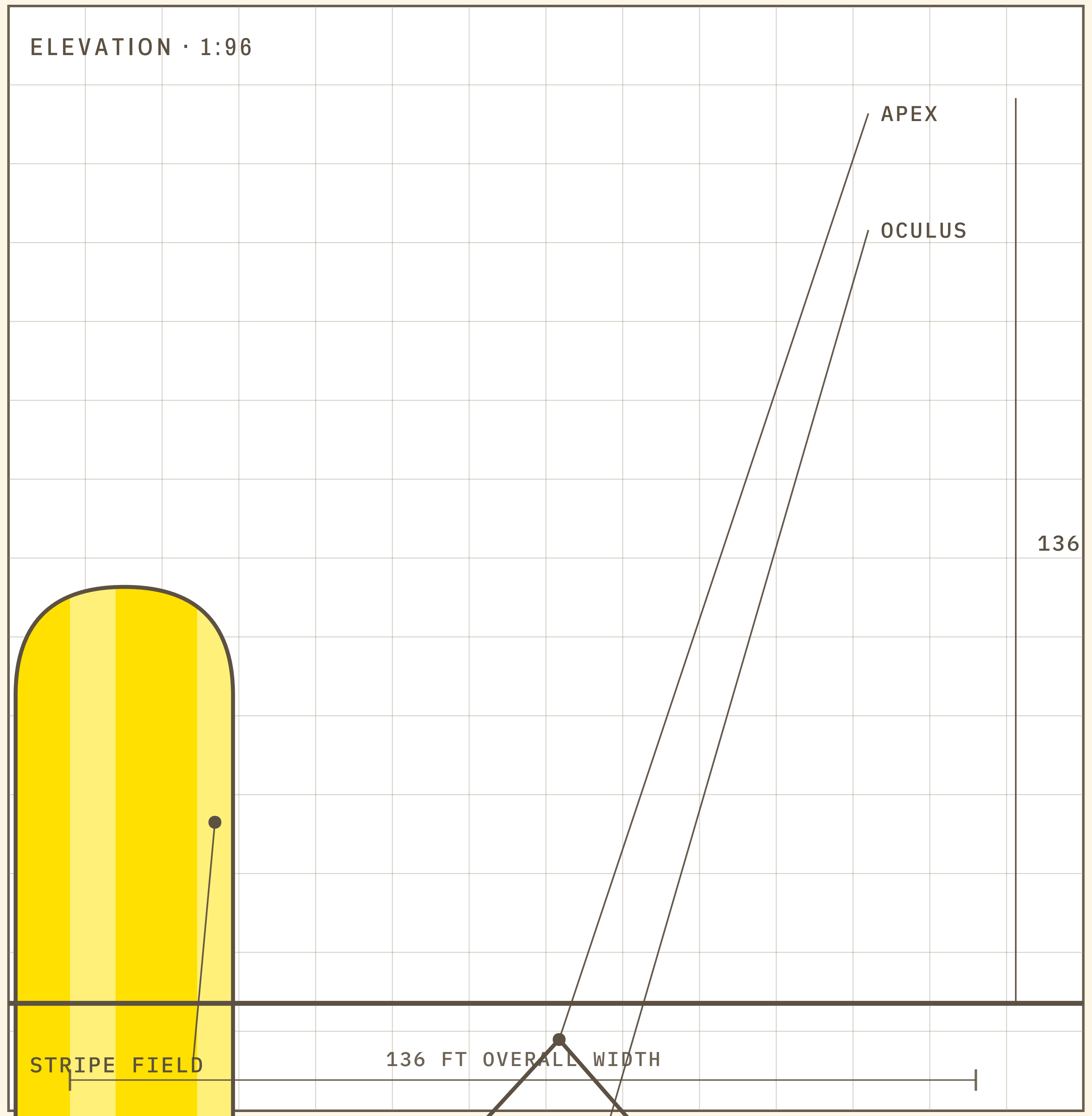
READING No gable at all. A flat parapet, and above it two white round-topped stacks with orange eyes. The building becomes a face without intending to, which is the risk and the reward of working at this scale.

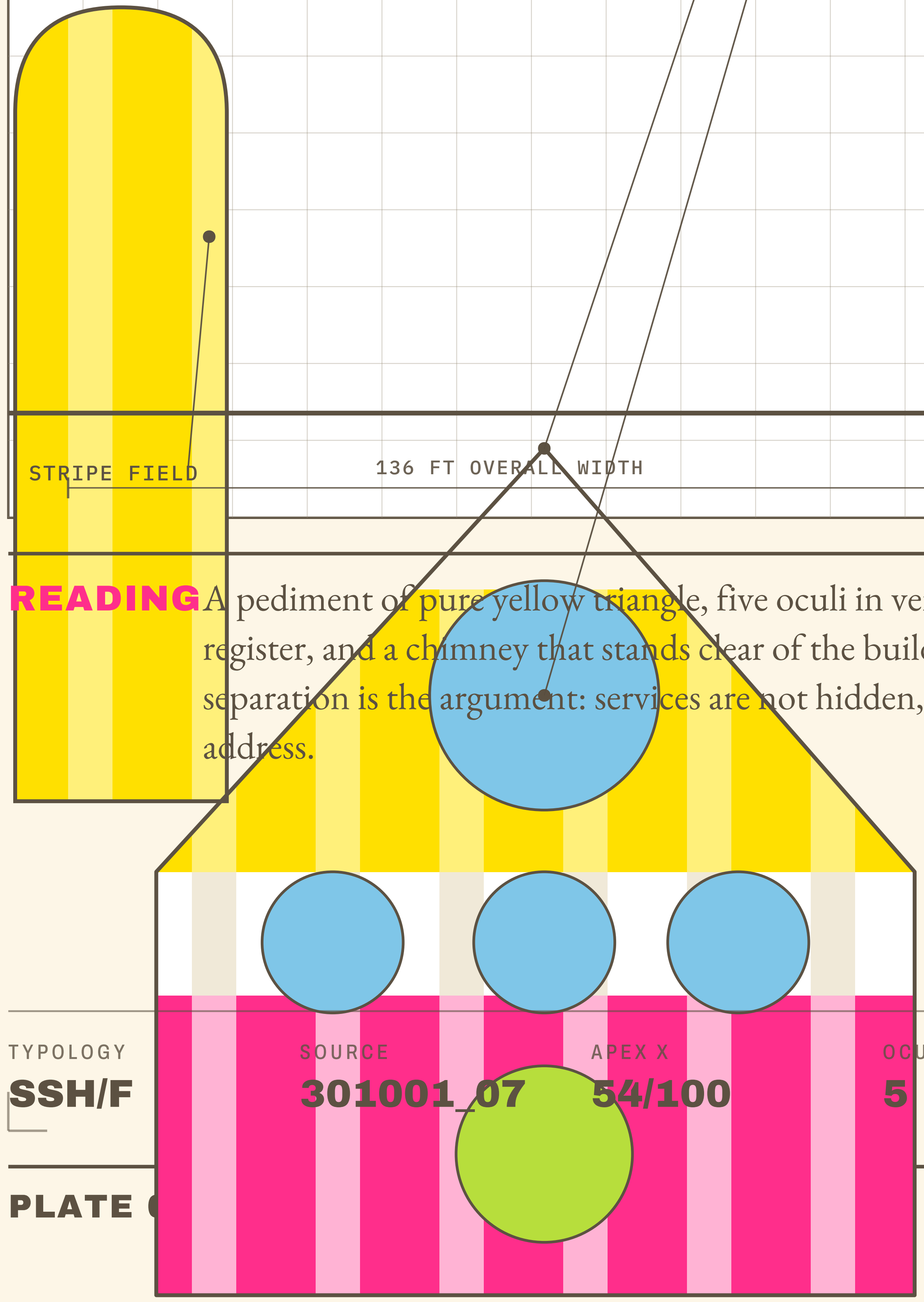
TYPOLOGY	SOURCE	APEX X	OCULI	FINIALS	FIELDS	BLACK
SSH/E	301001_06	50/100	2	2	4	0.00%

PLAT

PEDIMENT + DETACHED CHIMNEY

CHIMNEY DETACHED 16 CLEAR / 5 OCULI





CHROMATIC DECOMPOSITION

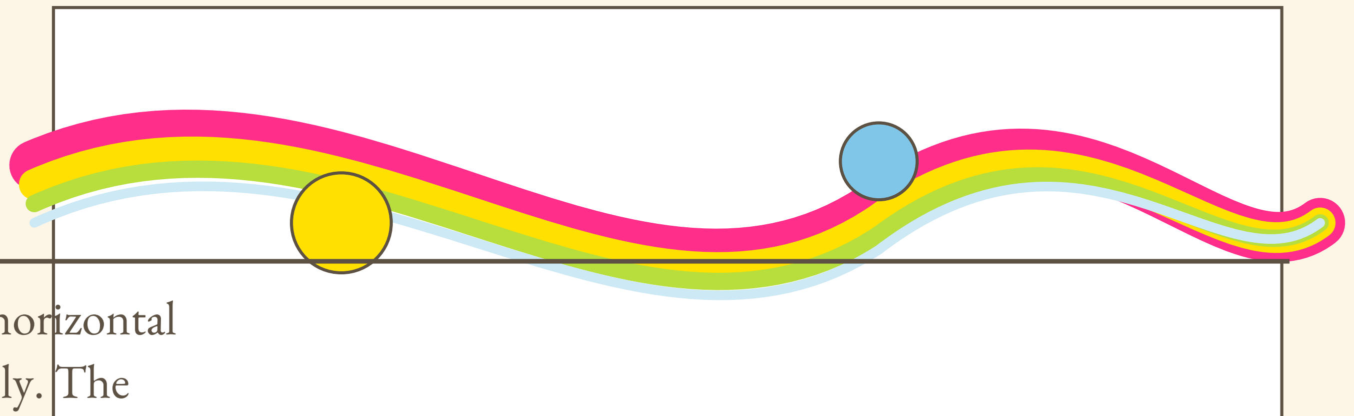
- 42% PINK STRIPE FIELD
- 36% CHROME FLOOD
- 16% WHITE BAND
- 06% SKY OCULI

TOTAL FIELD 100% · BLACK 00%

SUPERGRAPHIC OPERATIONS

1 DETACH · 2 PERFORATE · 3 FLOOD · 4 BAND

GROUND CARPET · FIGURE GEOMETRY



READING A pediment of pure yellow triangle, five oculi in vertical and horizontal register, and a chimney that stands clear of the building entirely. The separation is the argument: services are not hidden, they are given their own address.

TYPOLOGY	SOURCE	APEX X	OCULI	FINIALS	FIELDS	BLACK
SSH/F	301001_07	54/100	5	1	4	0.00%

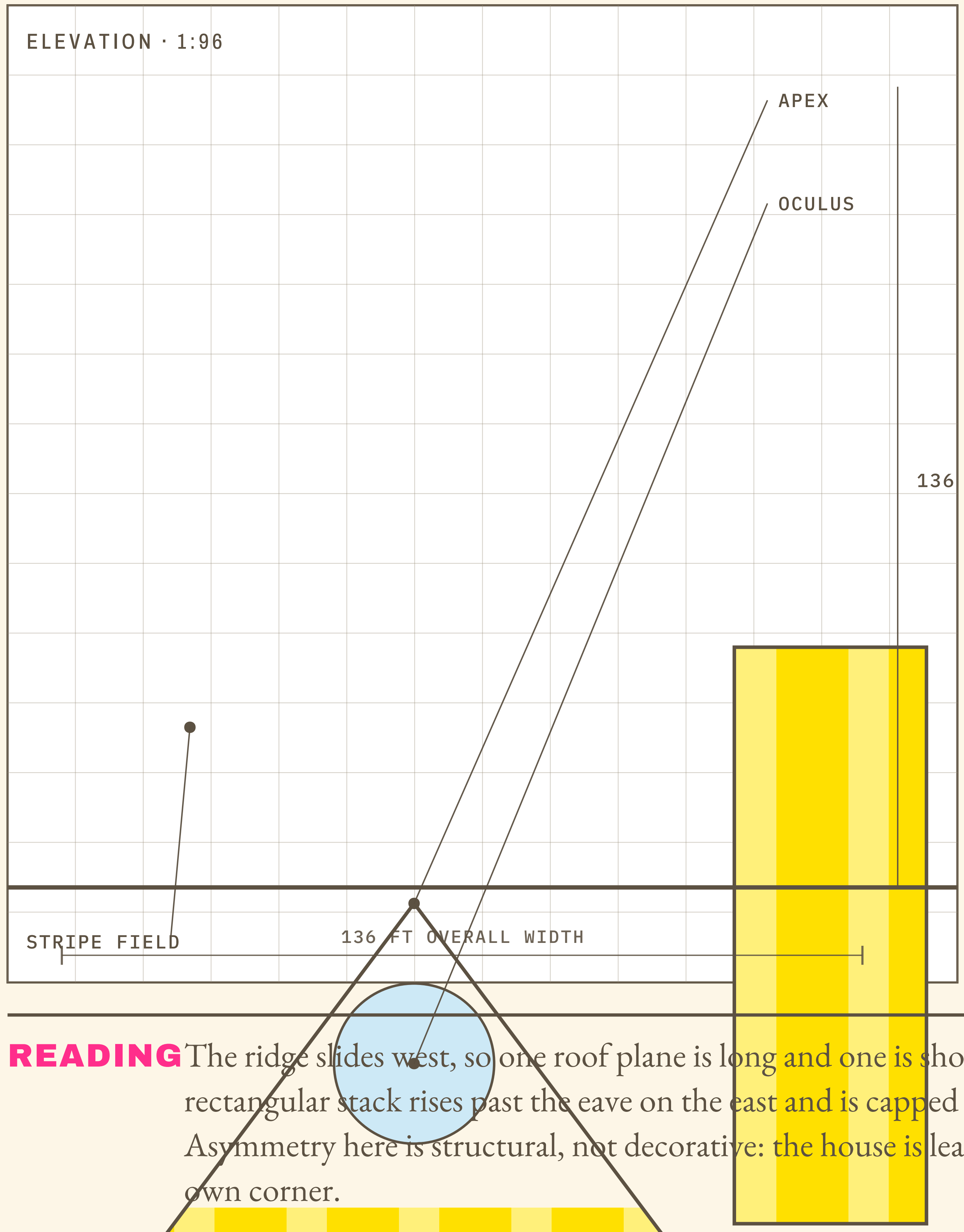
PLATE

SOURCE 301001_08

FULL-BLEED FIELD PHOTOGRAPH · OVERLAY: CROP / FLOOD / TRACE

ASYMMETRIC GABLE + OFFSET STACK

RIDGE OFFSET WEST / STACK +30 ABOVE EAVE



CHROMATIC DECOMPOSITION

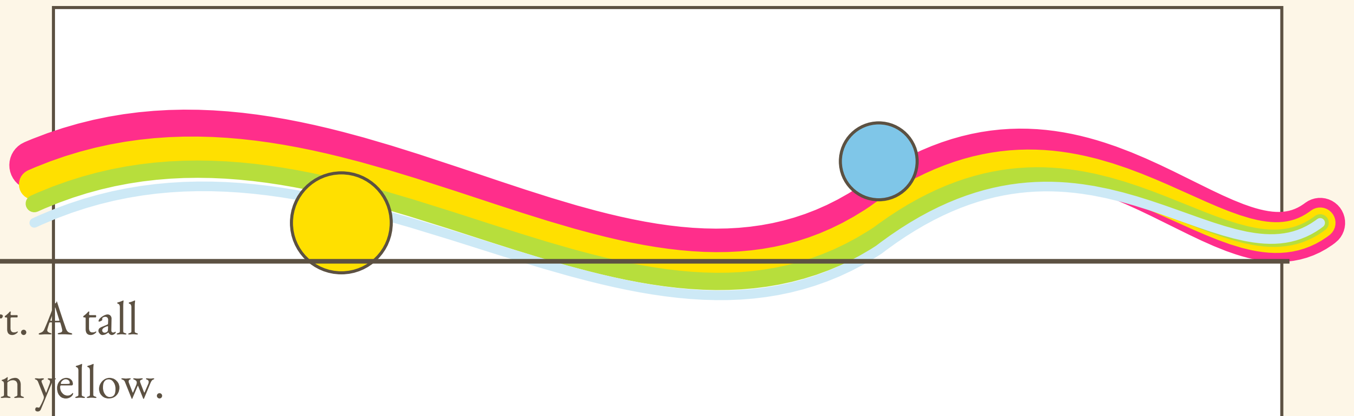
- 44% PINK STRIPE FIELD
- 38% CHROME FLOOD
- 15% WHITE MASS
- 03% SKY OCULUS

TOTAL FIELD 100% · BLACK 00%

SUPERGRAPHIC OPERATIONS

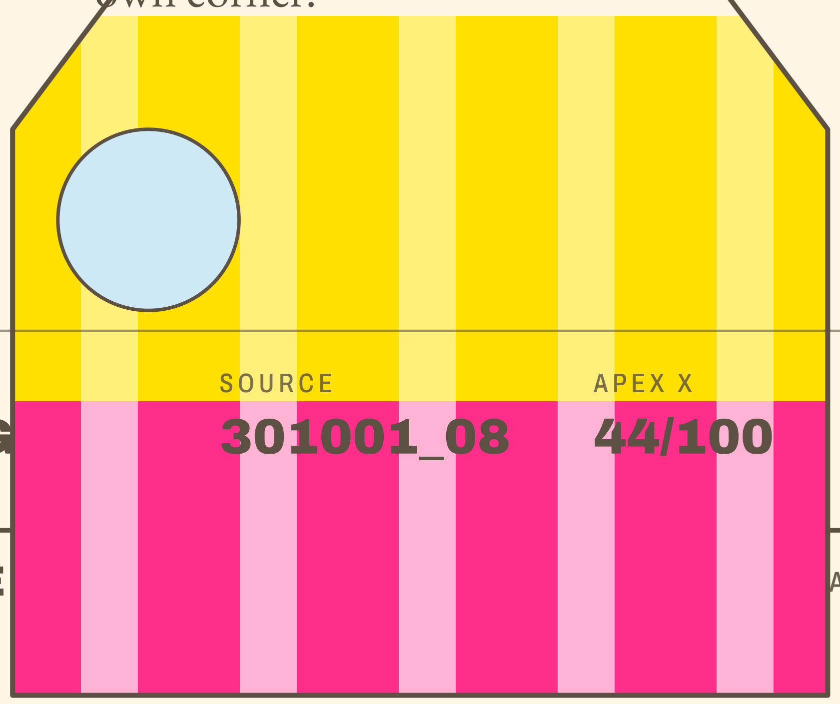
1. SHEAR
2. OFFSET
3. FLOOD
4. CAP

GROUND CARPET · FIGURE GEOMETRY



SWEPT BANDS · NO ORTHOGONAL EDGE · READ BY FOOT BEFORE EYE

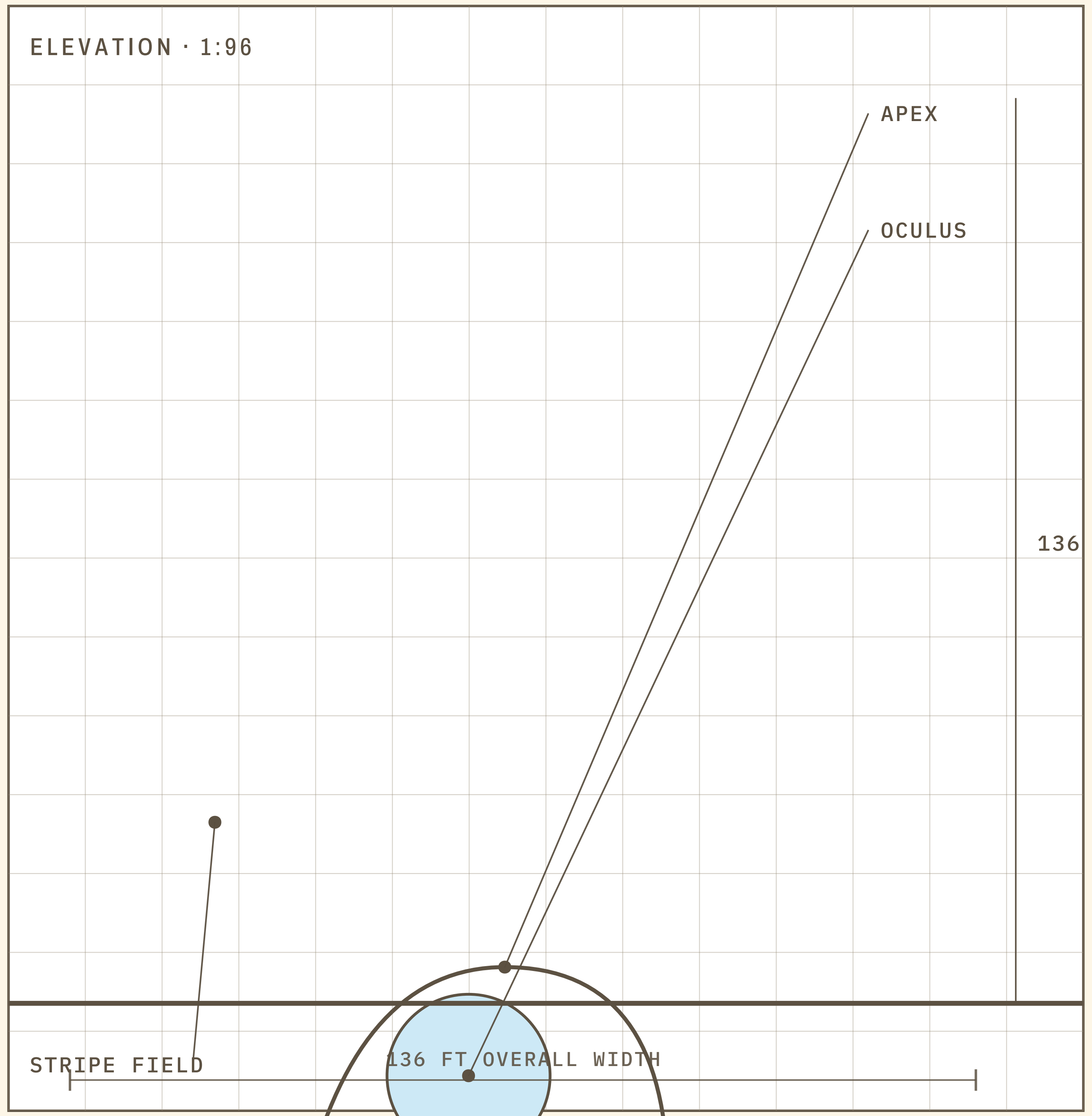
READING The ridge slides west, so one roof plane is long and one is short. A tall rectangular stack rises past the eave on the east and is capped in yellow. Asymmetry here is structural, not decorative: the house is leaning into its own corner.



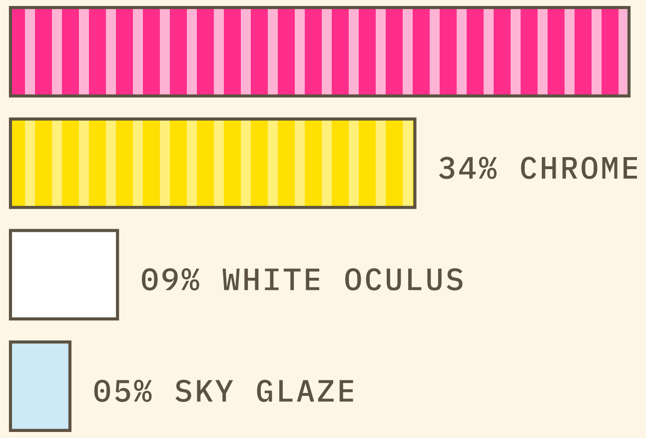
TYPOLOGY	SOURCE	APEX X	OCULI	FINIALS	FIELDS	BLACK
SSH/G	301001_08	44/100	2	1	4	0.00%

BULBOUS OGEE GABLE + DOUBLE OCULUS

OGEE PROFILE / TWO OCULI ON ONE AXIS



CHROMATIC DECOMPOSITION

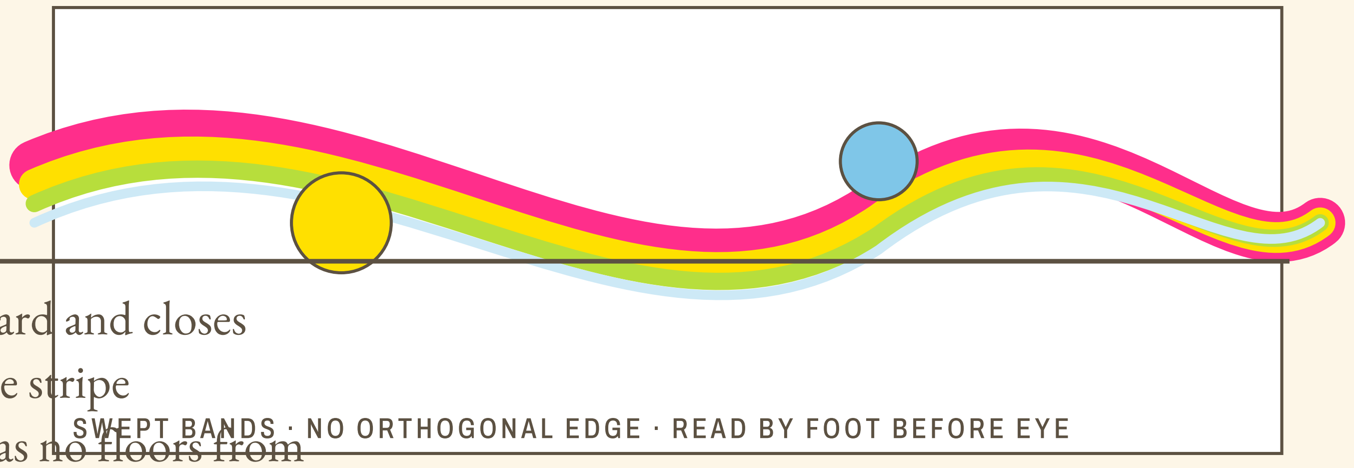


TOTAL FIELD 100% · BLACK 00%

SUPERGRAPHIC OPERATIONS

1 SWELL · 2 STACK · 3 FLOOD · 4 DISSOLVE

GROUND CARPET · FIGURE GEOMETRY



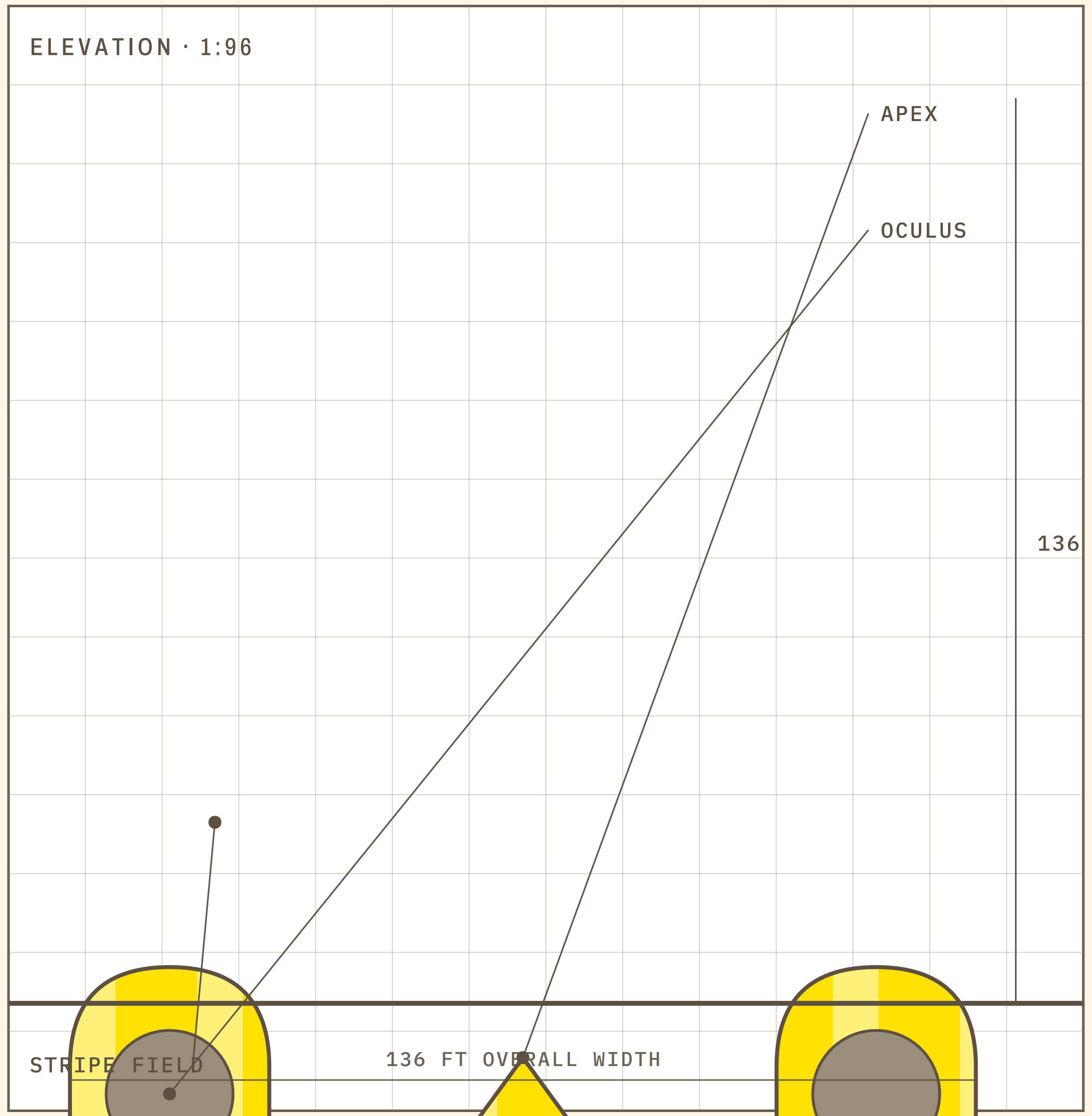
READING The only curved profile in the register. The gable swells outward and closes over, and two oculi sit on a single vertical axis like a colon. The stripe field runs top to bottom without a horizon, so the building has no floors from outside.

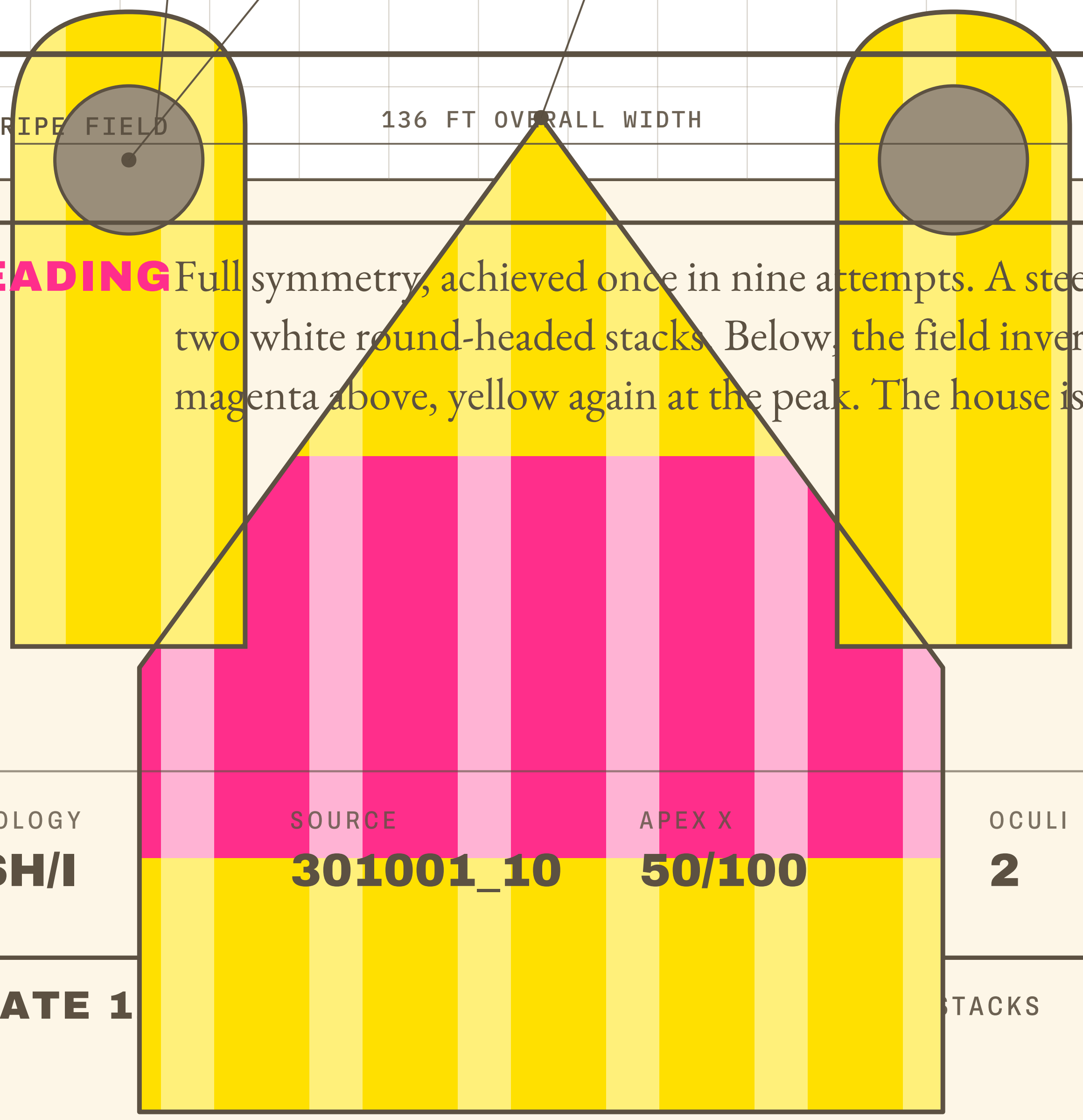
TYPOLOGY	SOURCE	APEX X	OCULI	FINIALS	FIELDS	BLACK
SSH/H	301001_09	48/100	2	0	4	0.00%

PLATE :

SYMMETRIC GABLE + FLANKING ROUND STACKS

STACKS Ø 22 SYMMETRICAL / GABLE 54°





CHROMATIC DECOMPOSITION

- 43% CHROME FLOOD
- 41% PINK STRIPE FIELD
- 12% WHITE STACK
- 04% STONE GROUND

TOTAL FIELD 100% · BLACK 00%

SUPERGRAPHIC OPERATIONS

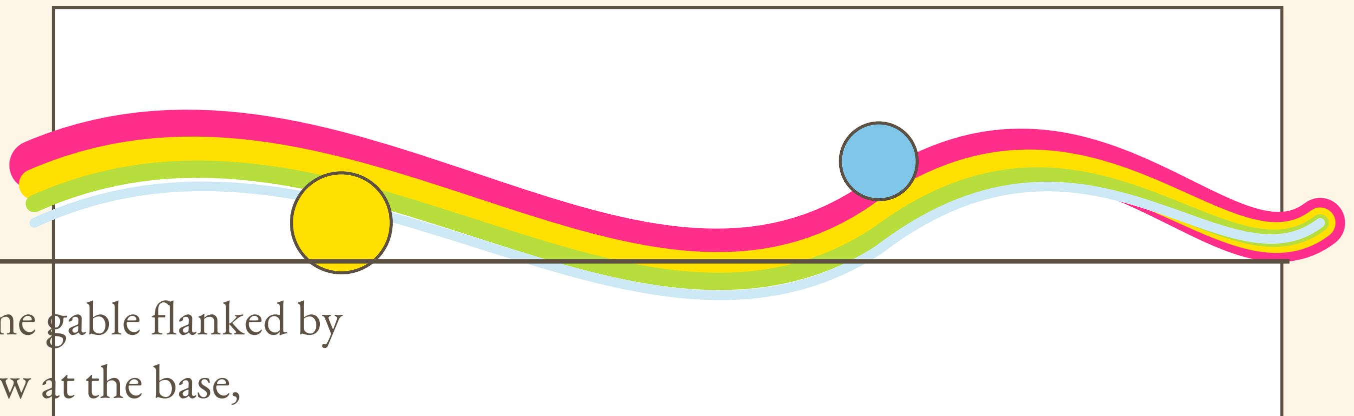
1 MIRROR

2 FLANK

3 INVERT

4 FLOOD

GROUND CARPET · FIGURE GEOMETRY



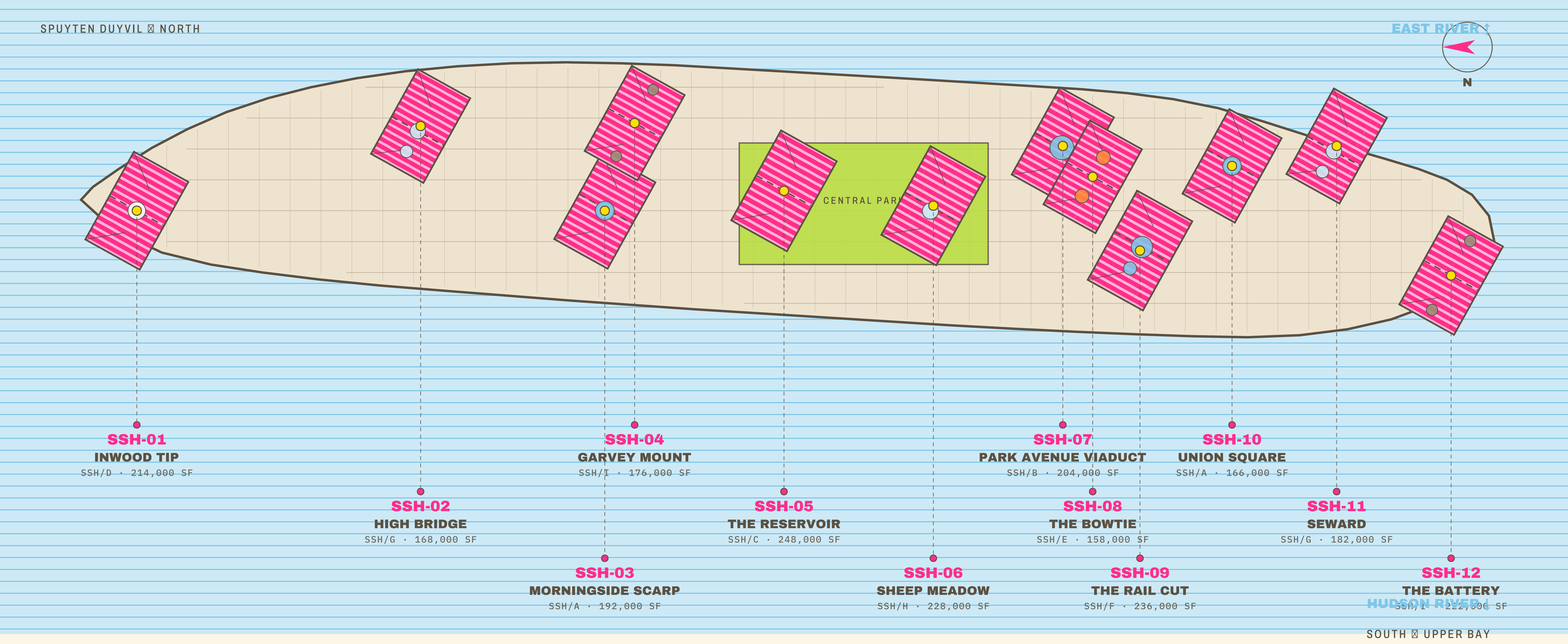
SWEPT BANDS · NO ORTHOGONAL EDGE · READ BY FOOT BEFORE EYE

READING Full symmetry, achieved once in nine attempts. A steep chrome gable flanked by two white round-headed stacks. Below, the field inverts: yellow at the base, magenta above, yellow again at the peak. The house is a chord, not a note.

TYPOLOGY	SOURCE	APEX X	OCULI	FINIALS	FIELDS	BLACK
SSH/I	301001_10	50/100	2	2	4	0.00%

TWELVE SUPER SCHOOL HOUSES

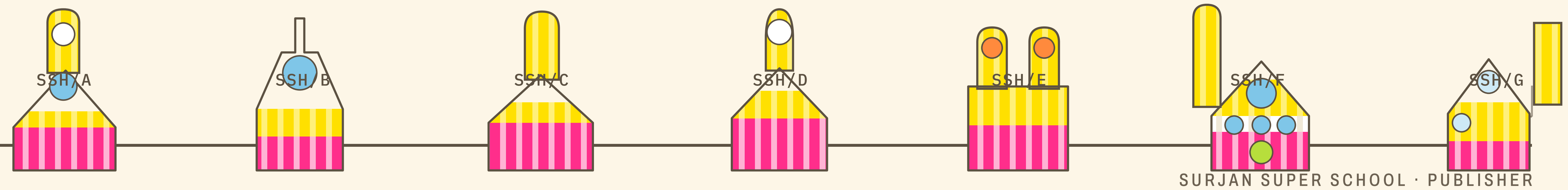
FOOTPRINTS SHOWN AT TRUE SPECULATIVE SCALE — EACH HOUSE CONSUMES BETWEEN FOUR AND NINE CITY BLOCKS



0 — 2 MILES

DIAGRAMMATIC · NOT A SURVEY · SHORELINE SIMPLIFIED · FOOTPRINTS POLEMICAL

TYPOLOGIES DEPLOYED

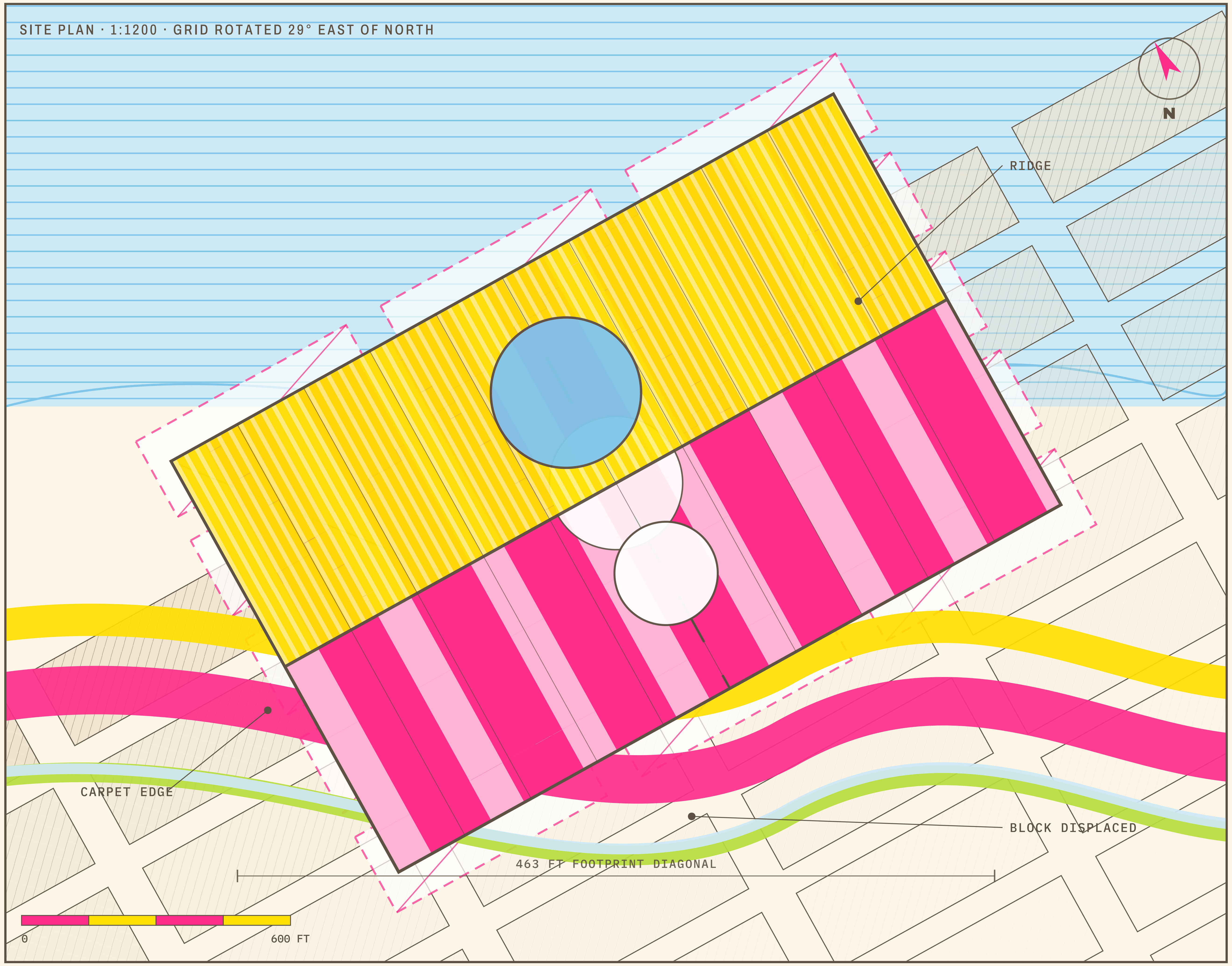


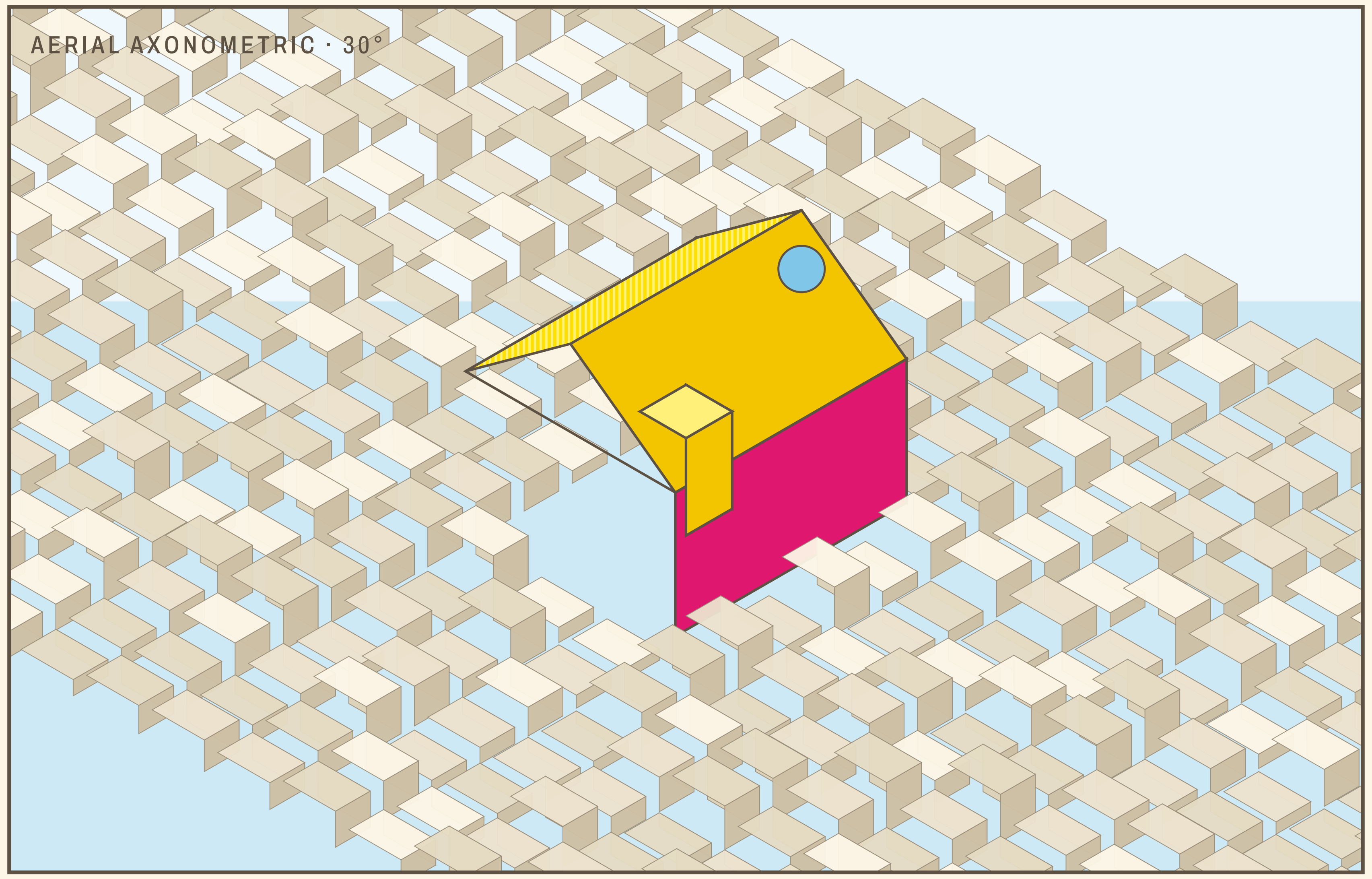
SSH-01 INWOOD TIP

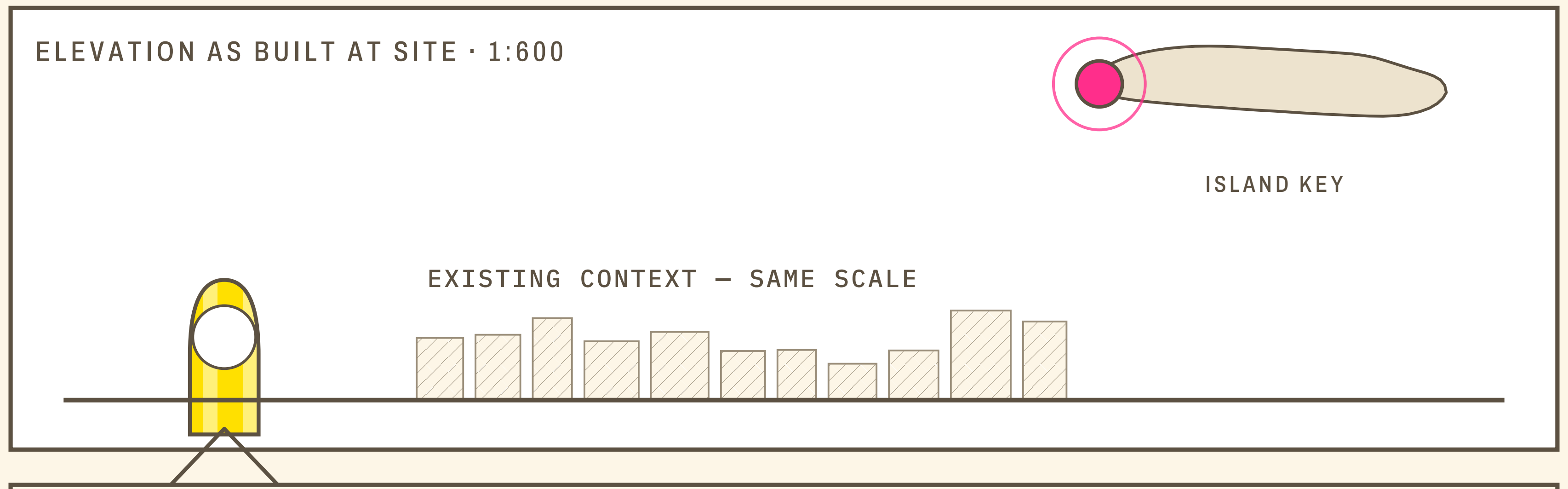
INWOOD HILL / SPUYTEN DUYVIL CREEK

SSH/D

RING FINIAL OVER STEEP GABLE







GROSS FLOOR AREA	214,000 SF
HEIGHT TO FINIAL	486 FT
CITY BLOCKS DISPLACED	7
STREET REFERENCE	NO GRID — GLACIAL SCHIST
SUBWAY	A · 1
EXISTING CONDITION	LAST OLD-GROWTH FOREST ON THE ISLAND

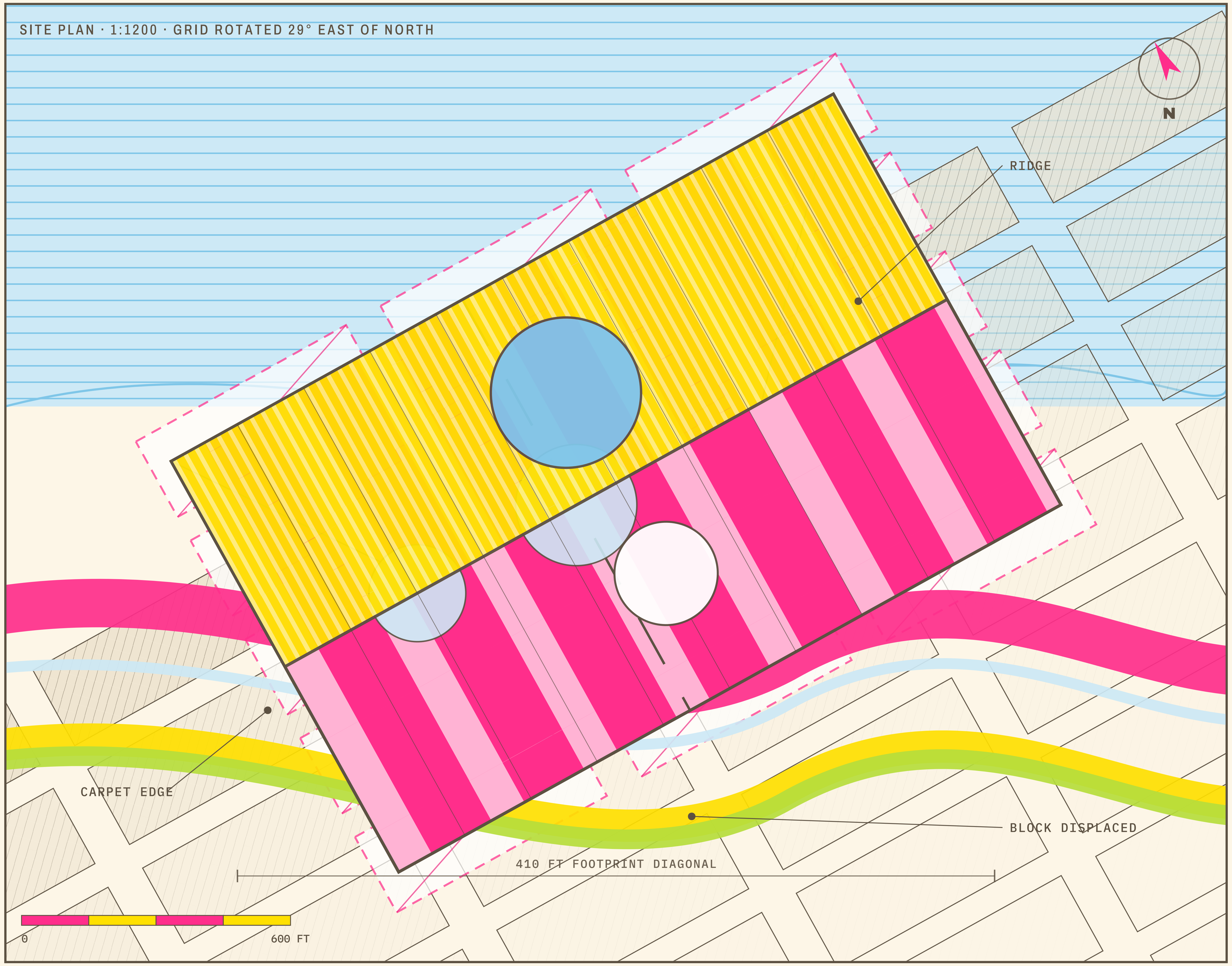
THE HOUSE STANDS WHERE THE ISLAND STARTS.

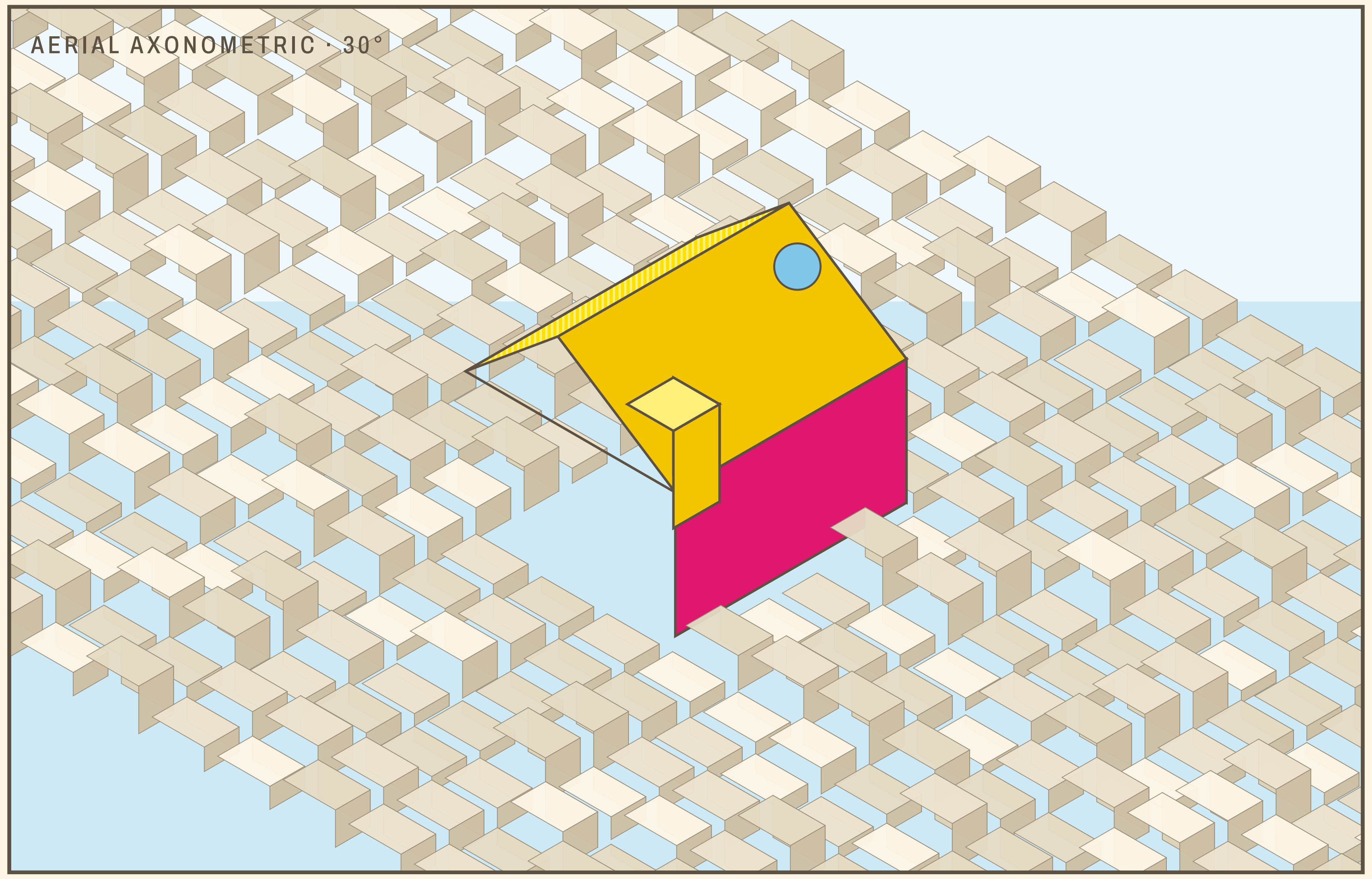
SSH-02 HIGH BRIDGE

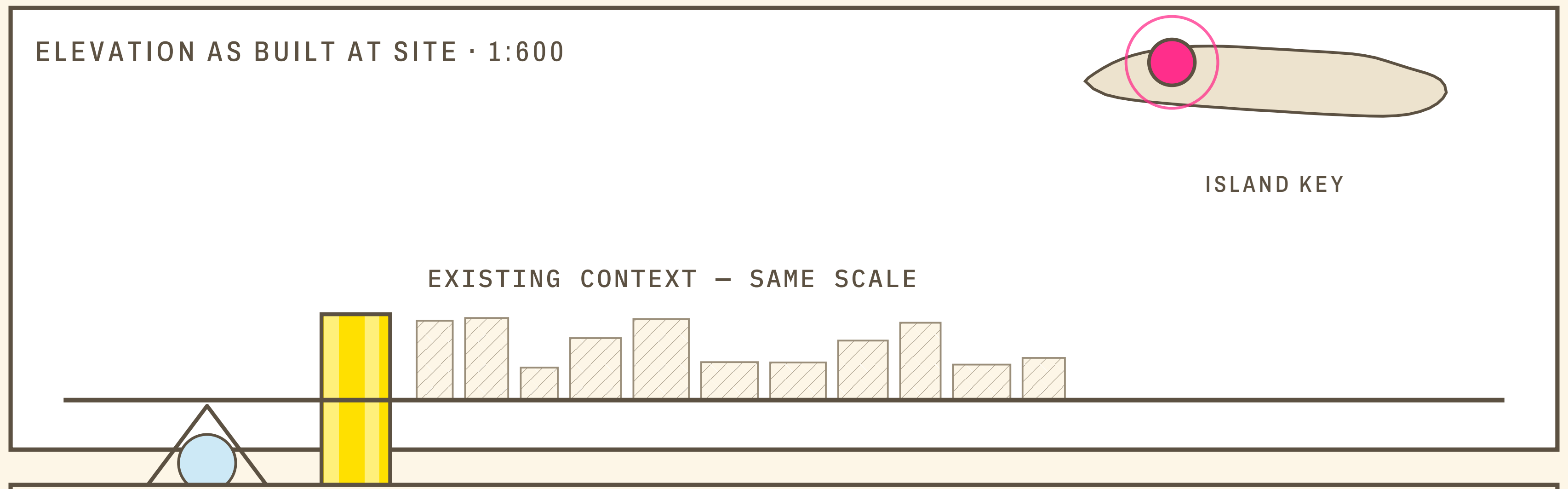
HIGHBRIDGE PARK · HARLEM RIVER · W 173

SSH/G

ASYMMETRIC GABLE + OFFSET STACK







GROSS FLOOR AREA	168,000 SF
HEIGHT TO FINIAL	402 FT
CITY BLOCKS DISPLACED	5
STREET REFERENCE	AMSTERDAM AV / W 173 ST
SUBWAY	1 · C
EXISTING CONDITION	AQUEDUCT PIERS / 1848 WATER CROSSING

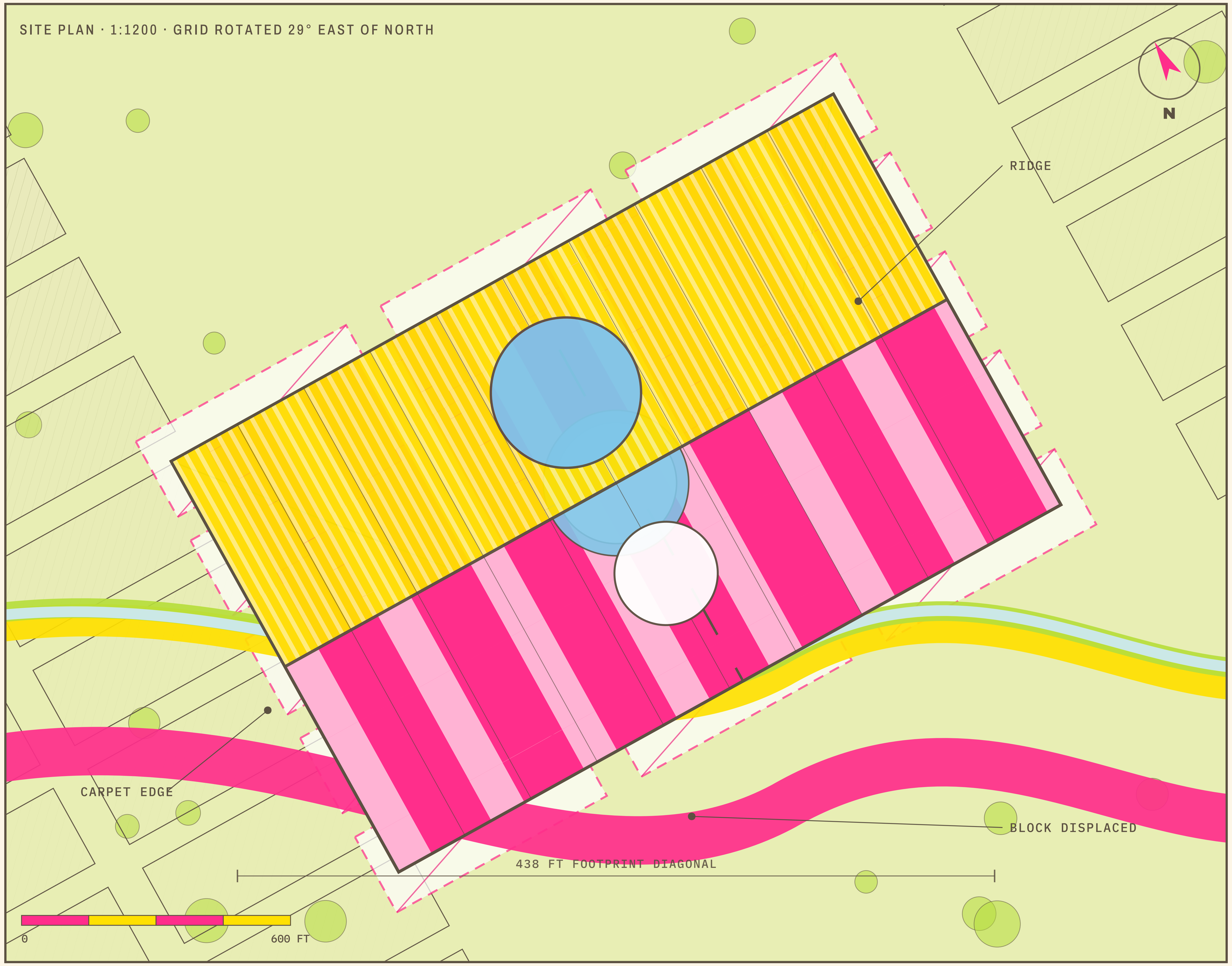
A SCHOOL THAT DRINKS FROM THE OLD AQUEDUCT.

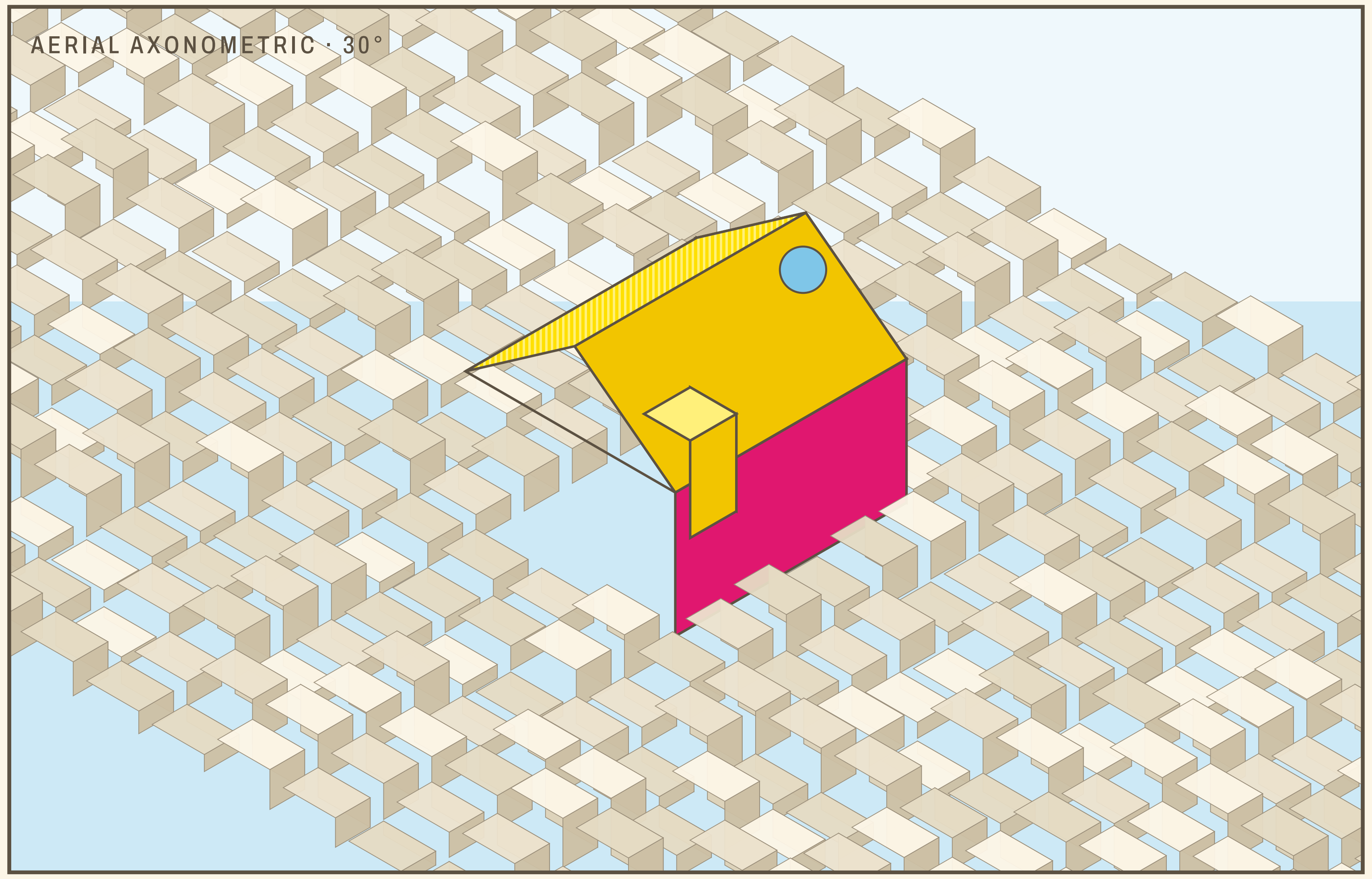
SSH-03 MORNINGSIDE SCARP

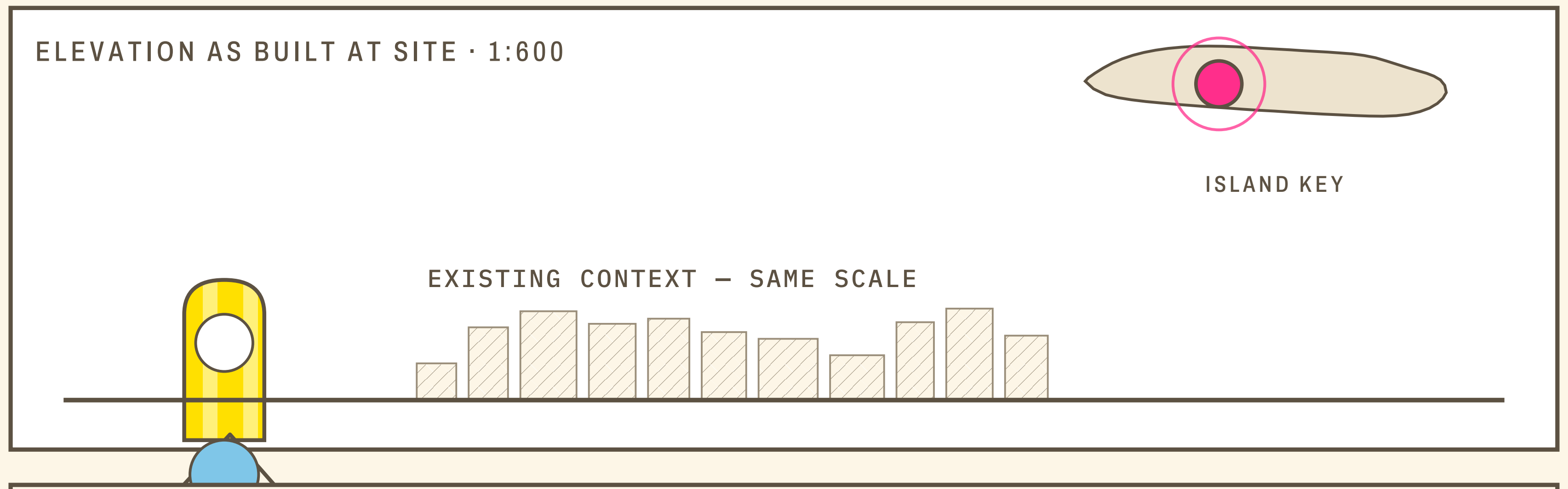
MORNINGSIDE PARK ESCARPMENT · W 116

SSH/A

GABLE + OFFSET OCULUS FINIAL







GROSS FLOOR AREA	192,000 SF
HEIGHT TO FINIAL	440 FT
CITY BLOCKS DISPLACED	6
STREET REFERENCE	MORNINGSIDE AV / W 116 ST
SUBWAY	B · C
EXISTING CONDITION	100 FT ROCK FACE BETWEEN TWO HARLEMS

THE GABLE BRIDGES A CLIFF THAT DIVIDES A CITY.

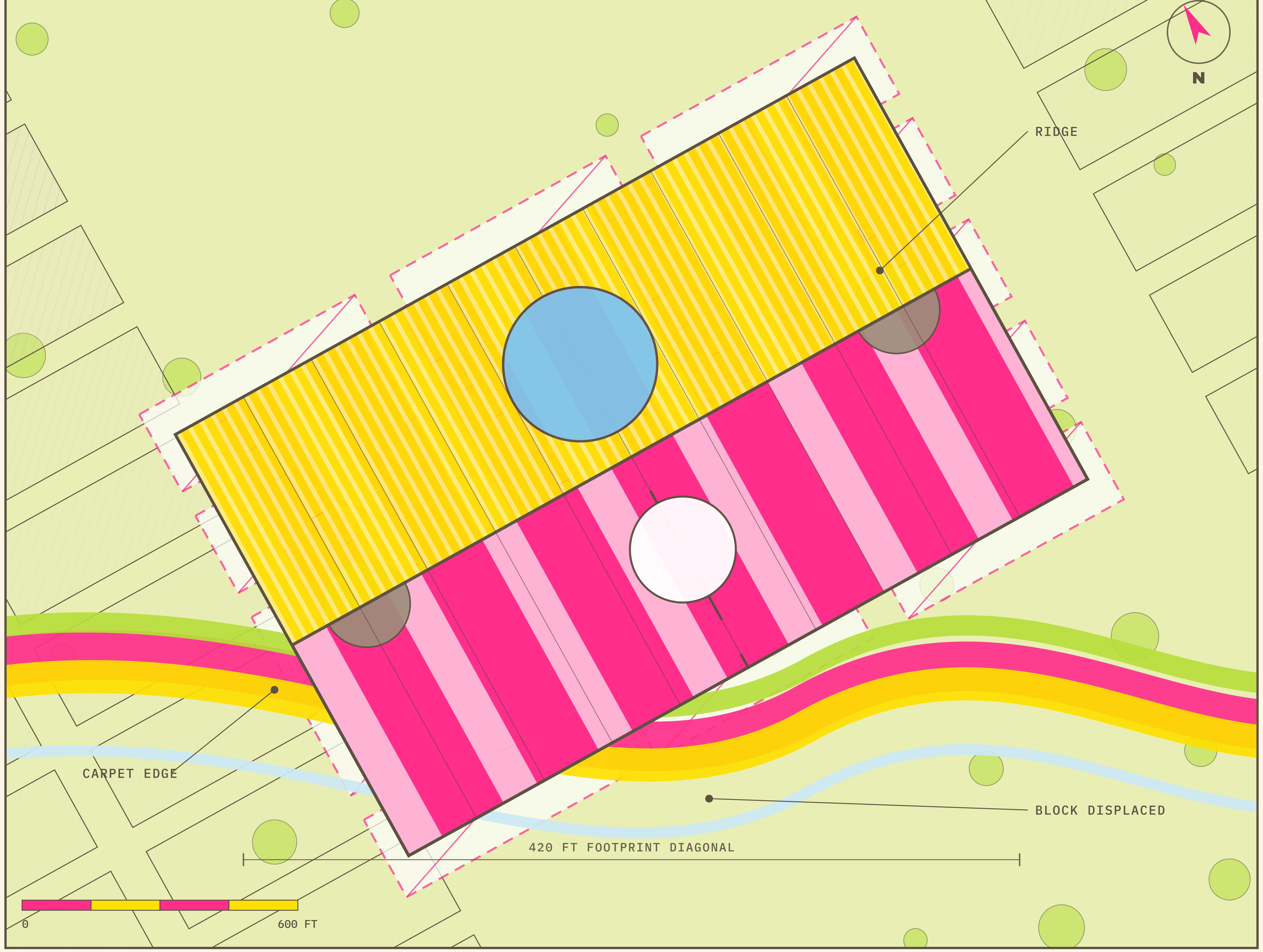
SSH-04 GARVEY MOUNT

MARCUS GARVEY PARK · E 122 ST

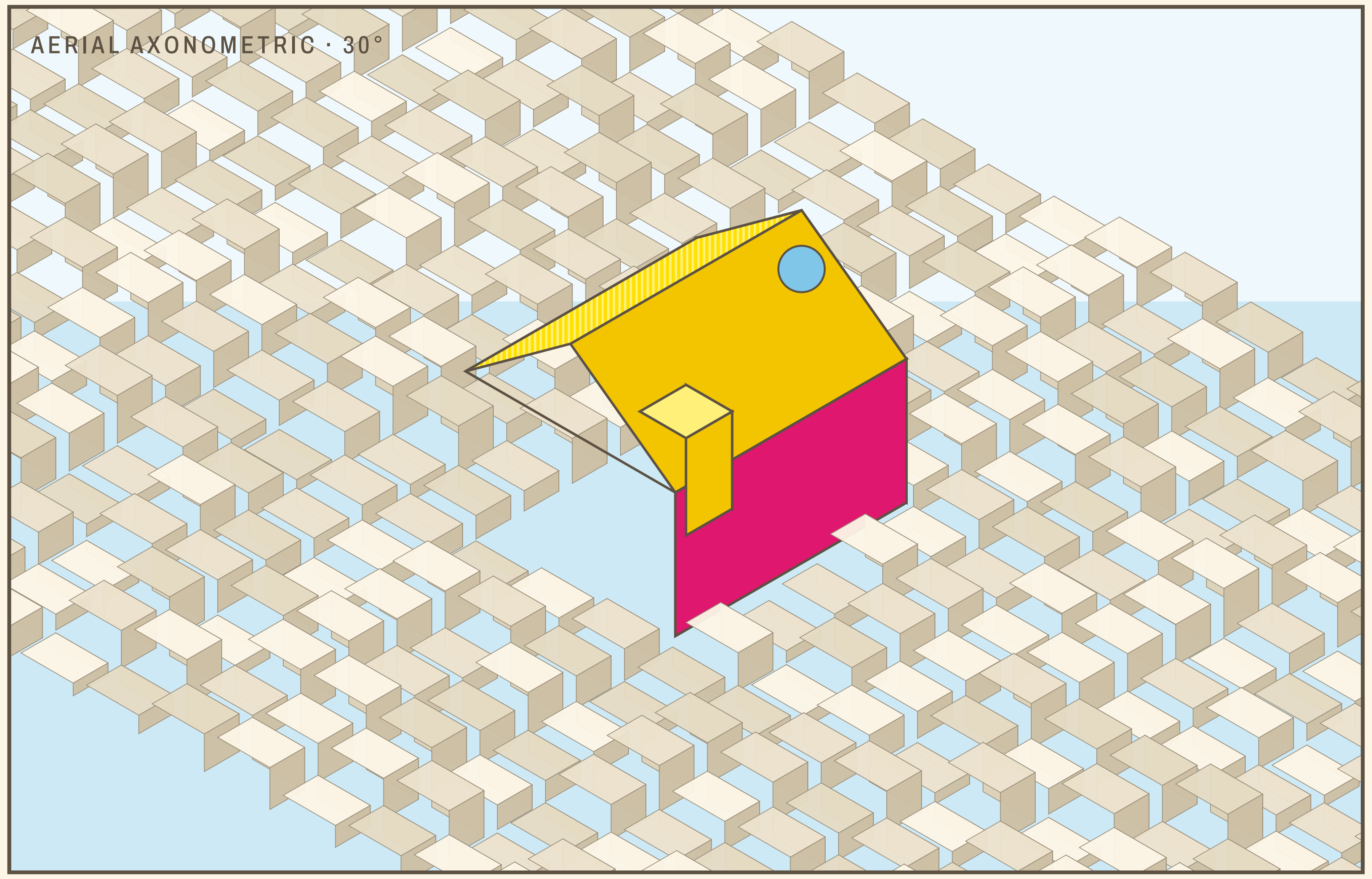
SSH/I

SYMMETRIC GABLE + FLANKING ROUND STACKS

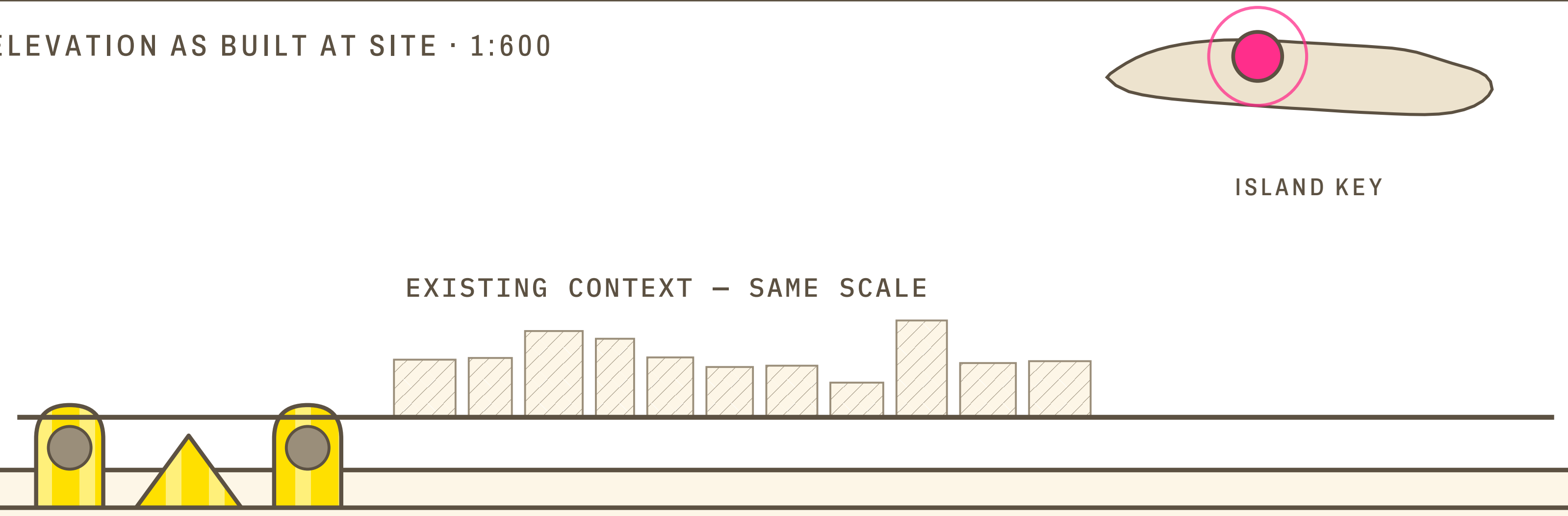
SITE PLAN · 1:1200 · GRID ROTATED 29° EAST OF NORTH



AERIAL AXONOMETRIC · 30°



ELEVATION AS BUILT AT SITE · 1:600



GROSS FLOOR AREA	176,000 SF
HEIGHT TO FINIAL	418 FT
CITY BLOCKS DISPLACED	5
STREET REFERENCE	MADISON AV / E 122 ST
SUBWAY	2 · 3
EXISTING CONDITION	1856 CAST-IRON FIRE WATCHTOWER

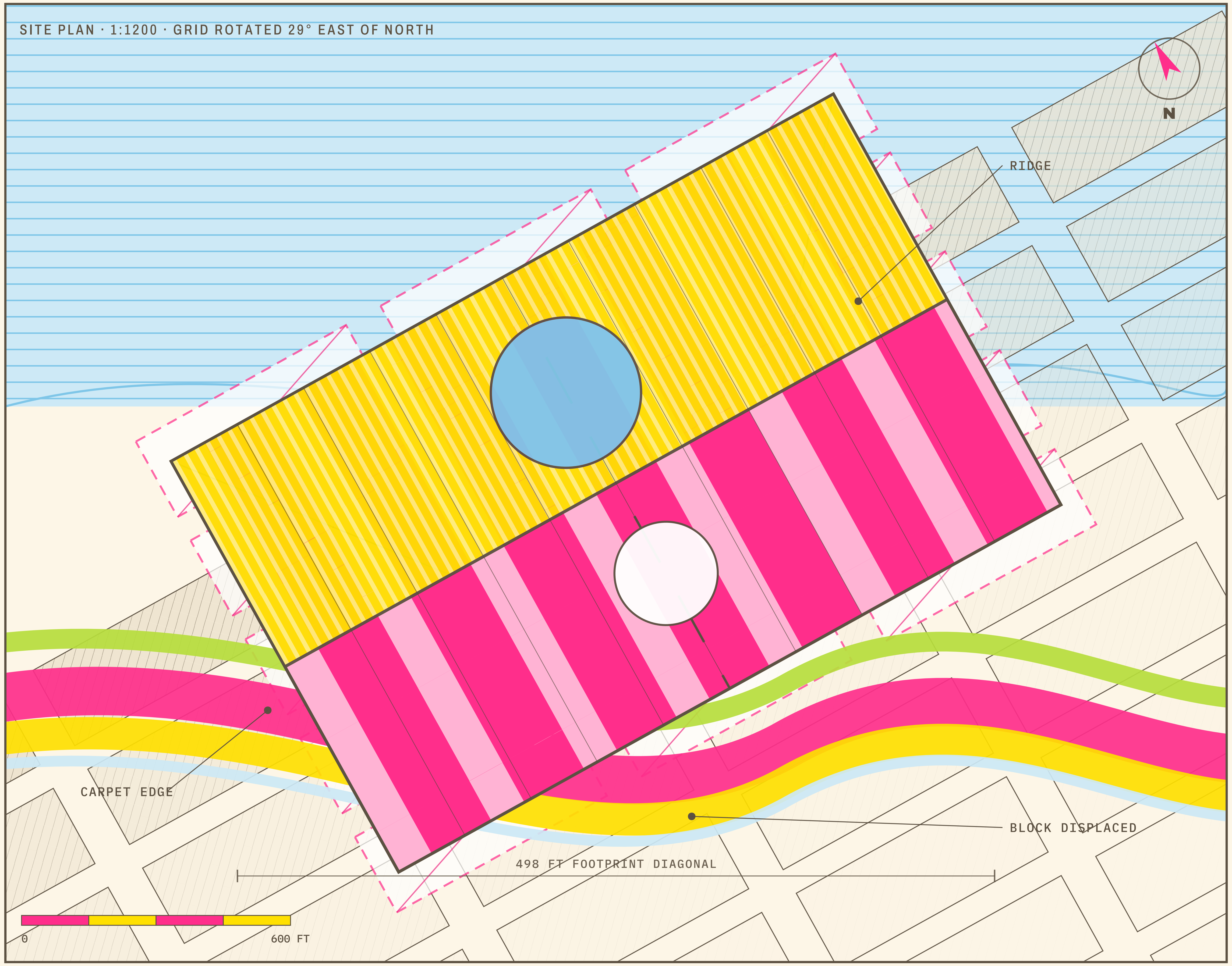
TWO STACKS ANSWER ONE WATCHTOWER.

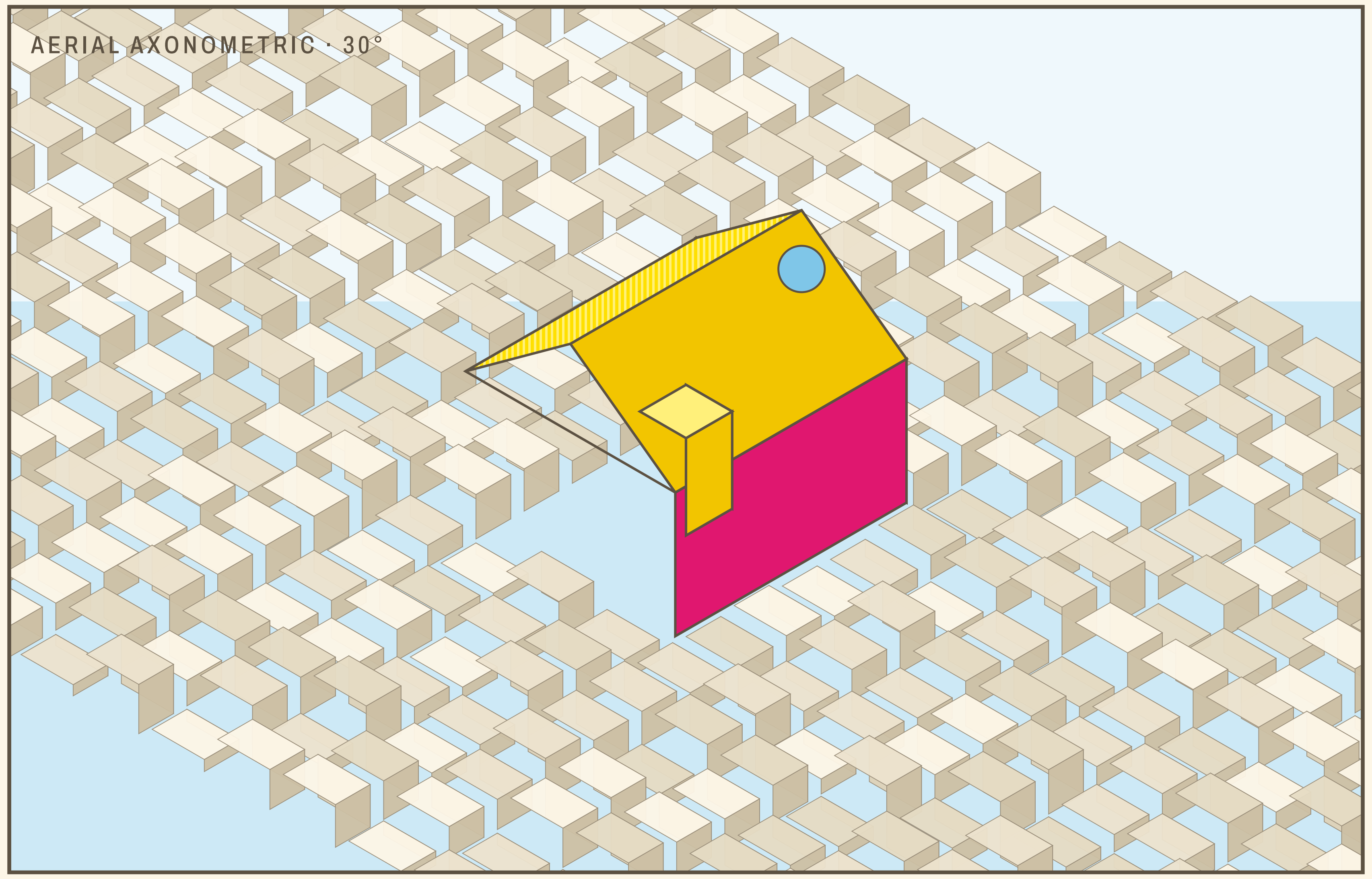
SSH-05 THE RESERVOIR

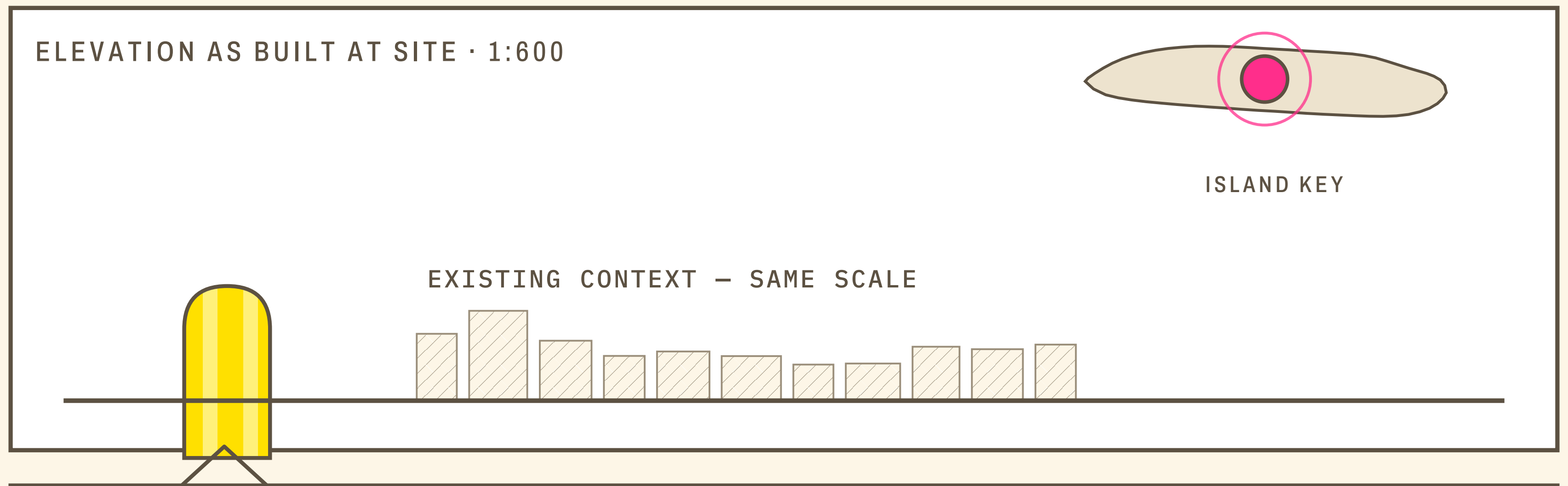
CENTRAL PARK RESERVOIR · E 90 ST

SSH/C

CYLINDER RISING BEHIND GABLE







GROSS FLOOR AREA	248,000 SF
HEIGHT TO FINIAL	520 FT
CITY BLOCKS DISPLACED	9
STREET REFERENCE	PARK INTERIOR — NO STREET
SUBWAY	4 · 5 · 6
EXISTING CONDITION	106 ACRES OF STANDING WATER

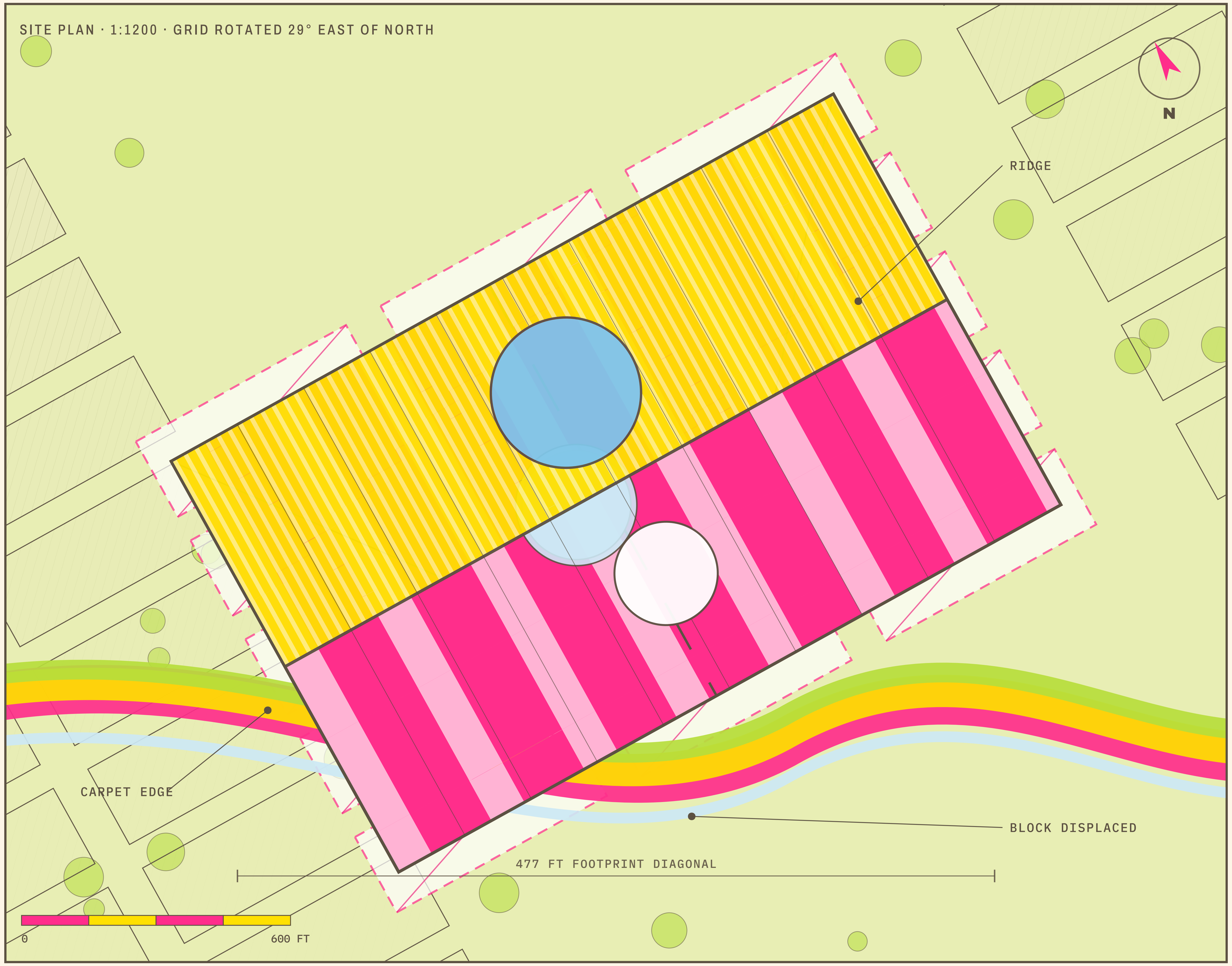
A DRUM ON A LAKE. THE CITY LOOKS IN.

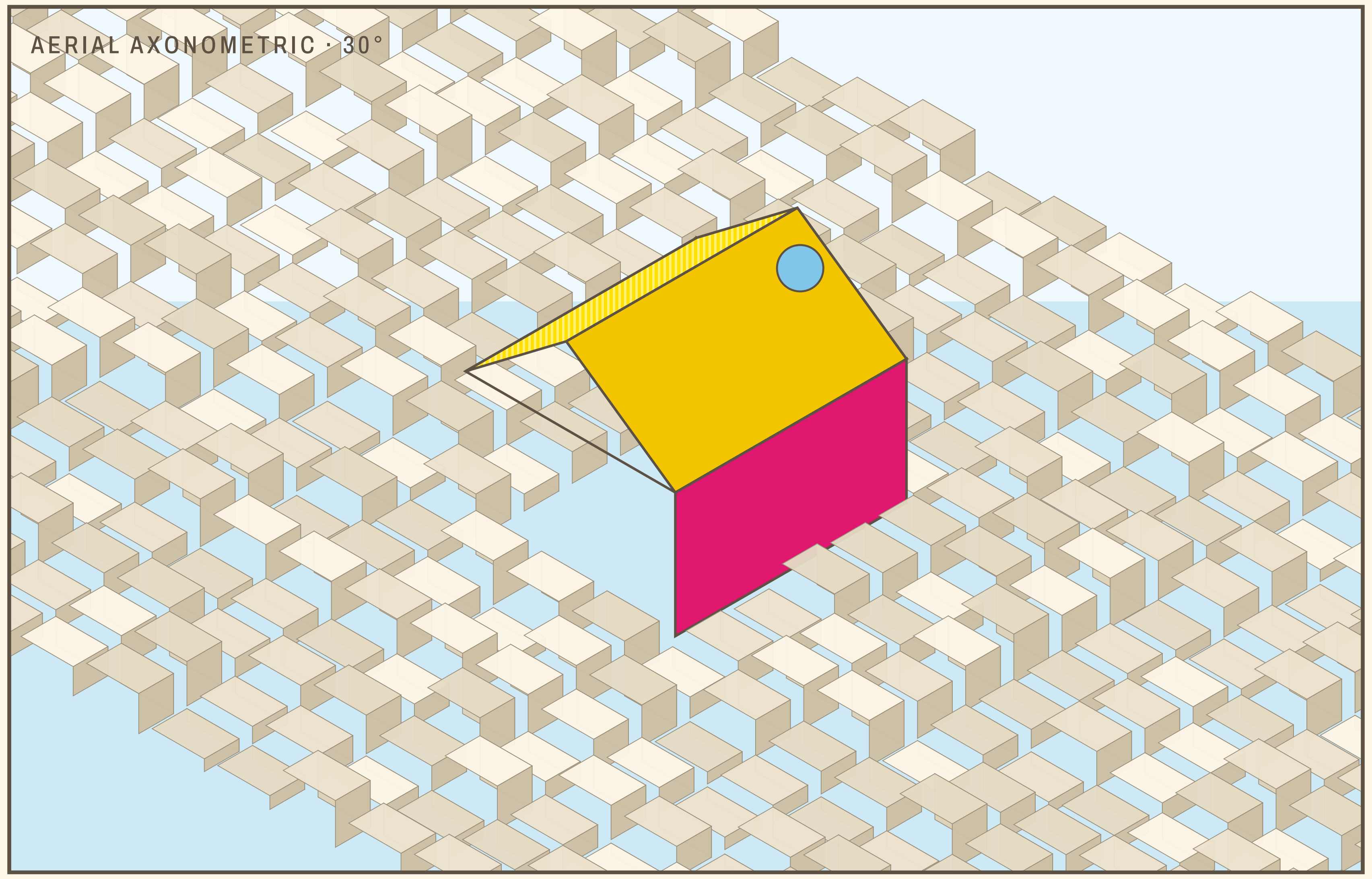
SSH-06 SHEEP MEADOW

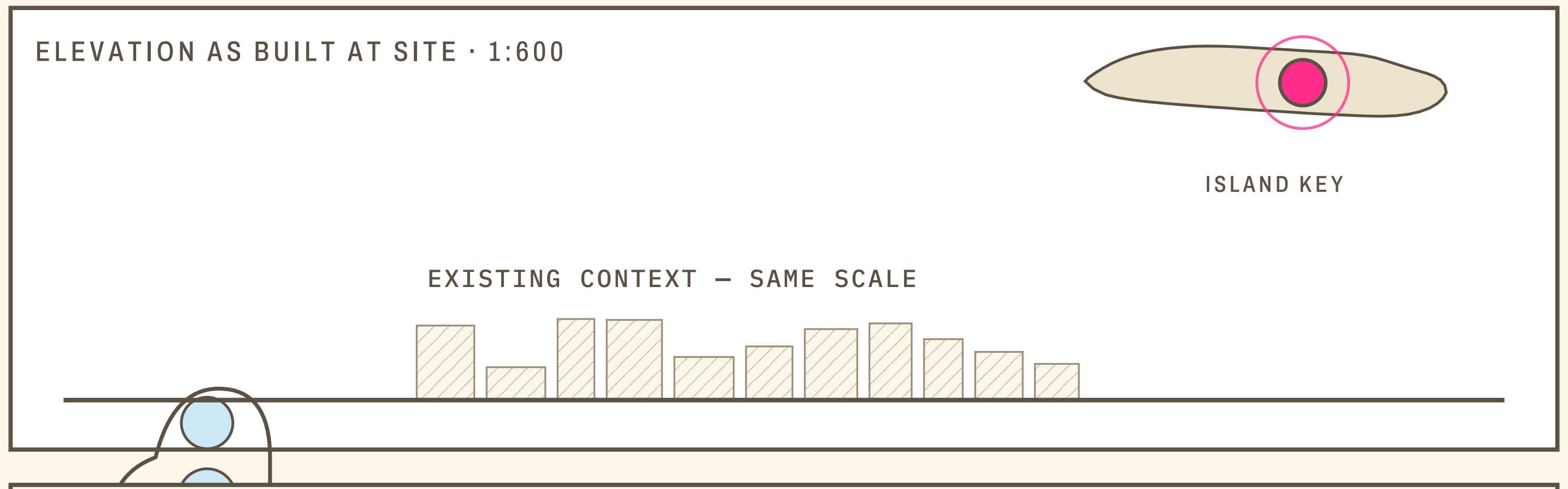
CENTRAL PARK · W 66 ST TRANSVERSE

SSH/H

BULBOUS OGEE GABLE + DOUBLE OCULUS







GROSS FLOOR AREA	228,000 SF
HEIGHT TO FINIAL	468 FT
CITY BLOCKS DISPLACED	8
STREET REFERENCE	PARK INTERIOR — NO STREET
SUBWAY	A · B · C
EXISTING CONDITION	15 ACRES OF DELIBERATE EMPTINESS

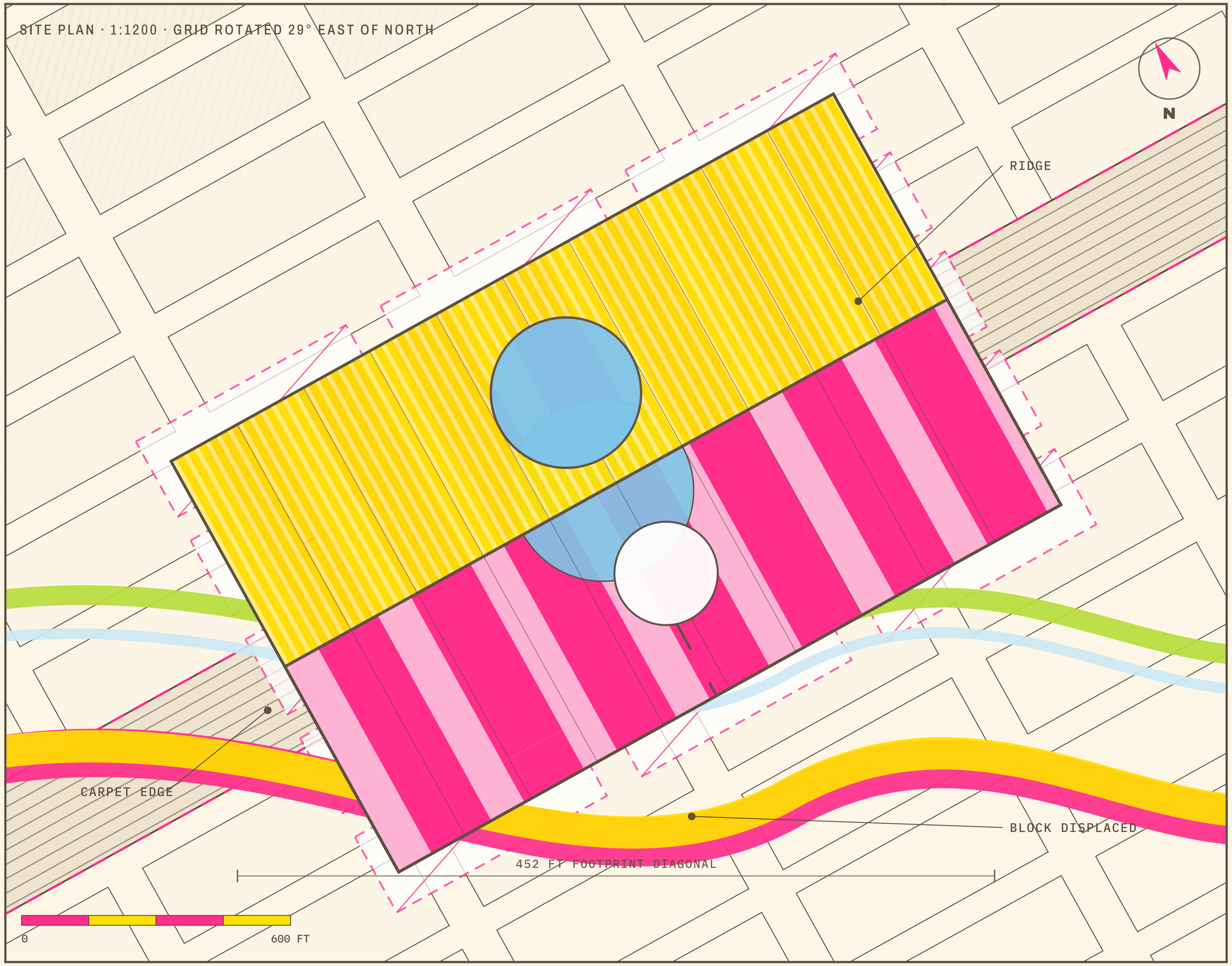
THE OGEE SITS DOWN IN THE MEADOW.

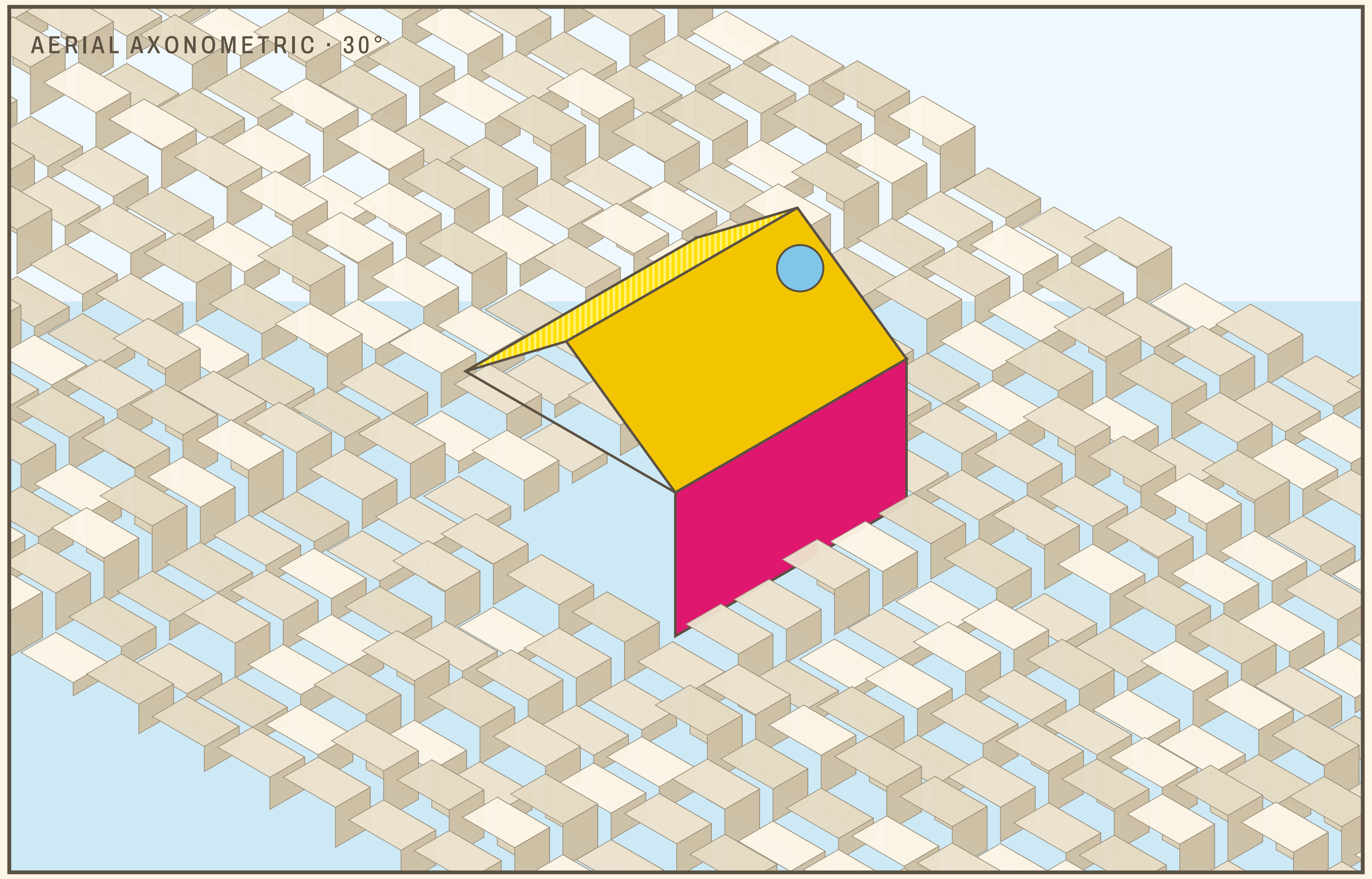
SSH-07 PARK AVENUE VIADUCT

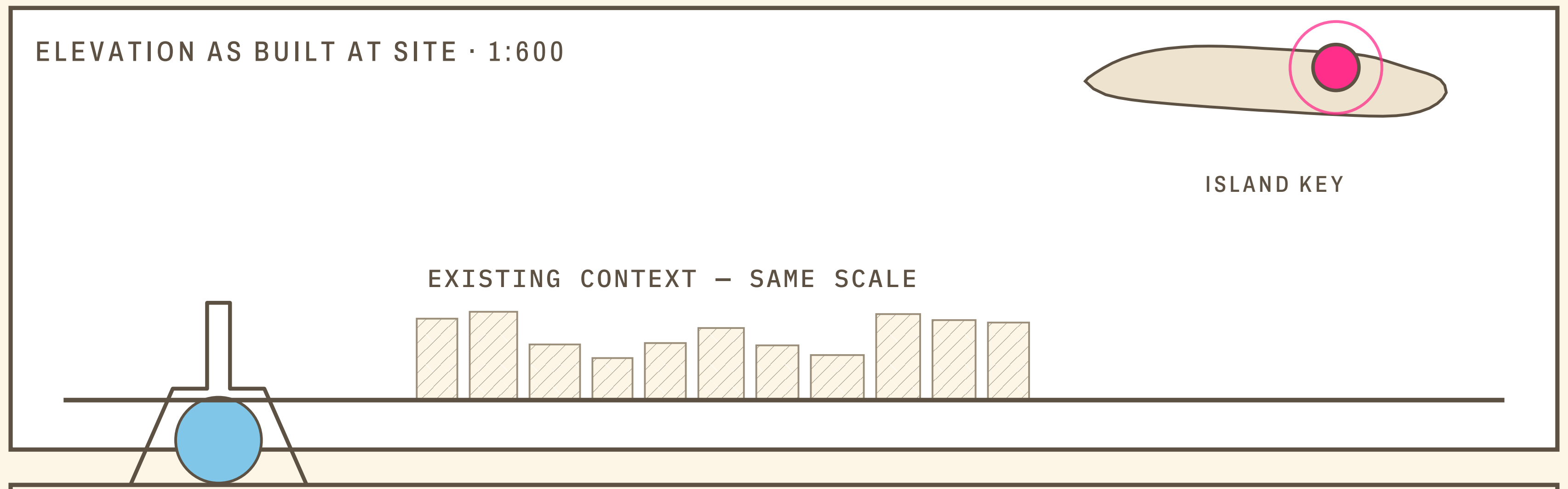
SSH/B

GRAND CENTRAL · E 42 ST · PARK AV

TAPERED TOWER + TWIN-PRONG NOTCH







GROSS FLOOR AREA	204,000 SF
HEIGHT TO FINIAL	612 FT
CITY BLOCKS DISPLACED	6
STREET REFERENCE	PARK AV / E 42 ST
SUBWAY	4 · 5 · 6 · 7 · S
EXISTING CONDITION	48 TRACKS BELOW / TERMINAL CONCOURSE

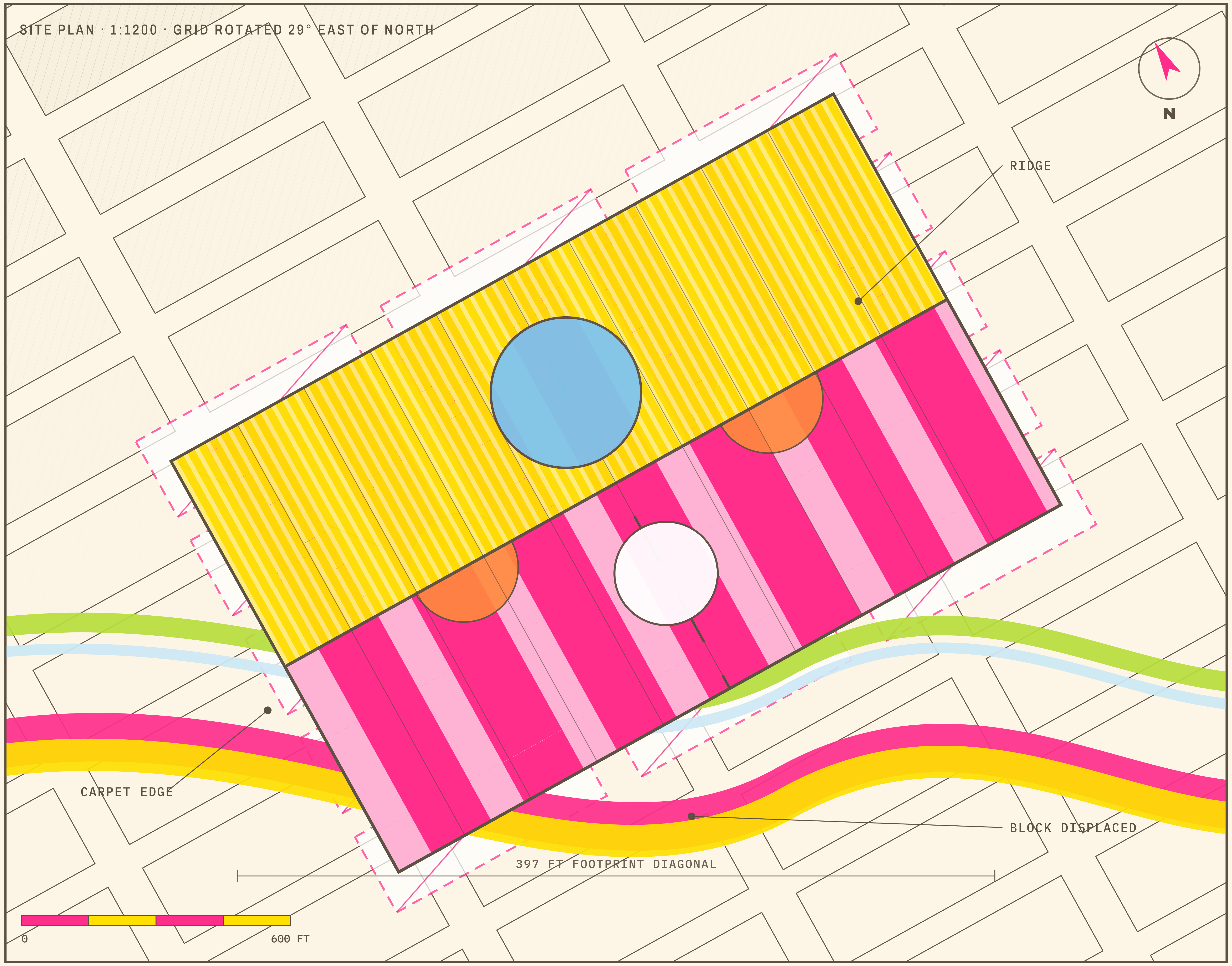
THE TAPER PLUGS INTO THE LARGEST ROOM IN NEW YORK.

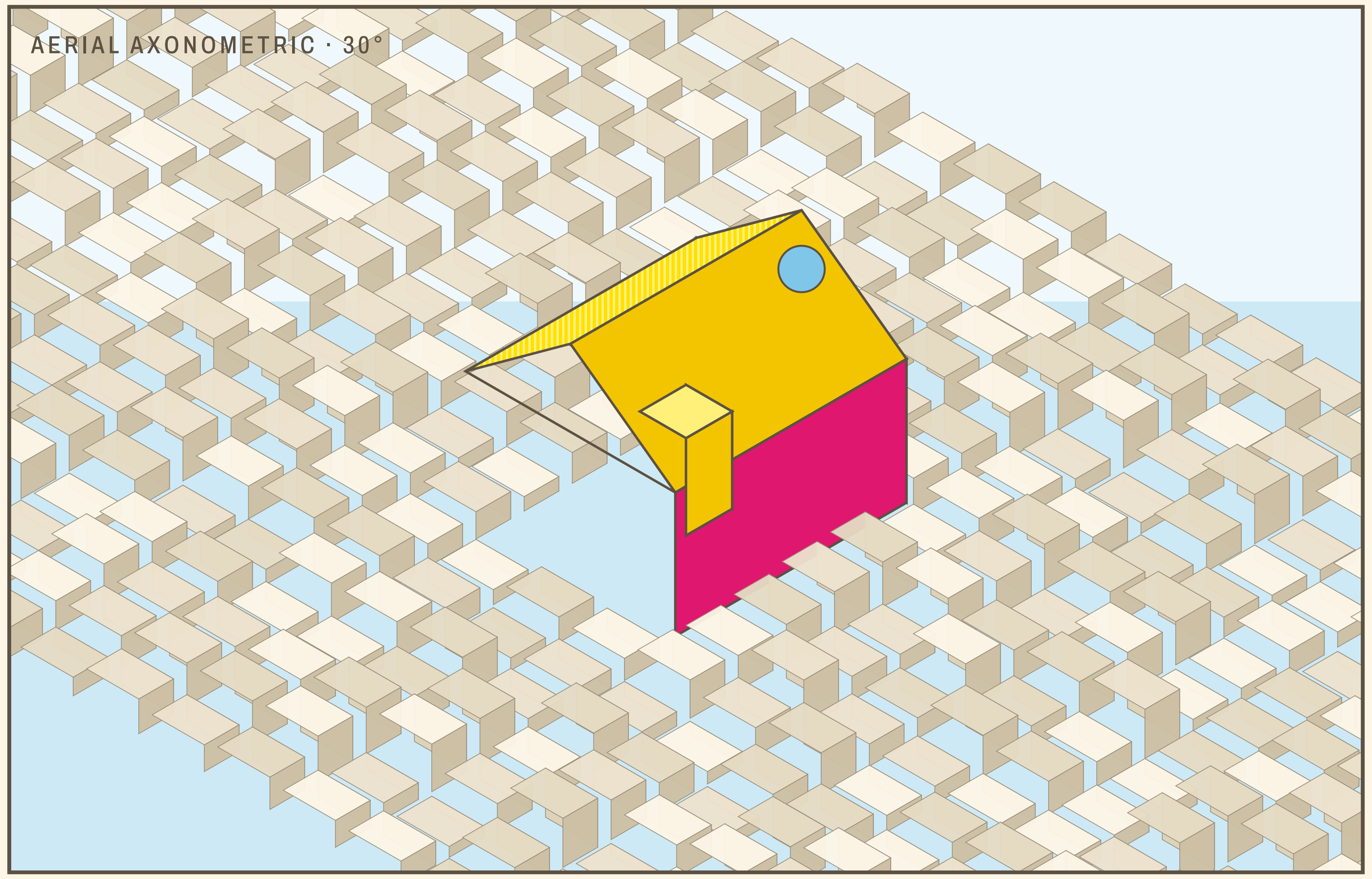
SSH-08 THE BOWTIE

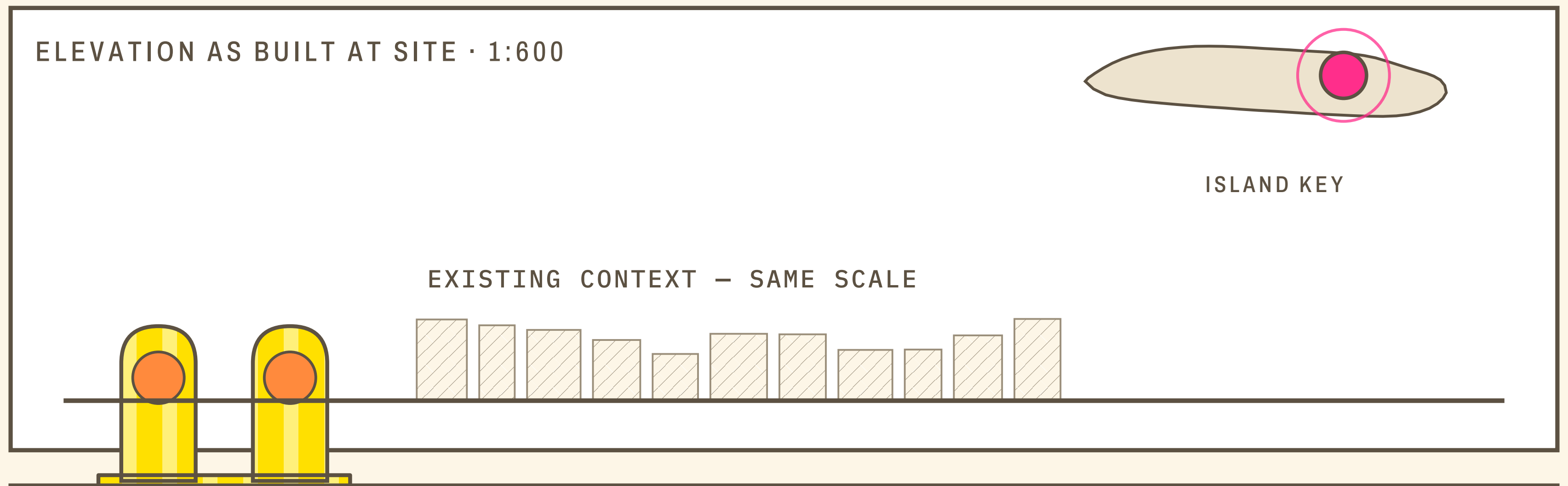
DUFFY SQUARE · BROADWAY × SEVENTH

SSH/E

FLAT VOLUME + TWIN OCULUS STACKS







GROSS FLOOR AREA	158,000 SF
HEIGHT TO FINIAL	534 FT
CITY BLOCKS DISPLACED	4
STREET REFERENCE	BROADWAY / W 46 ST
SUBWAY	N · Q · R · W · 1
EXISTING CONDITION	330,000 PEDESTRIANS / DAY

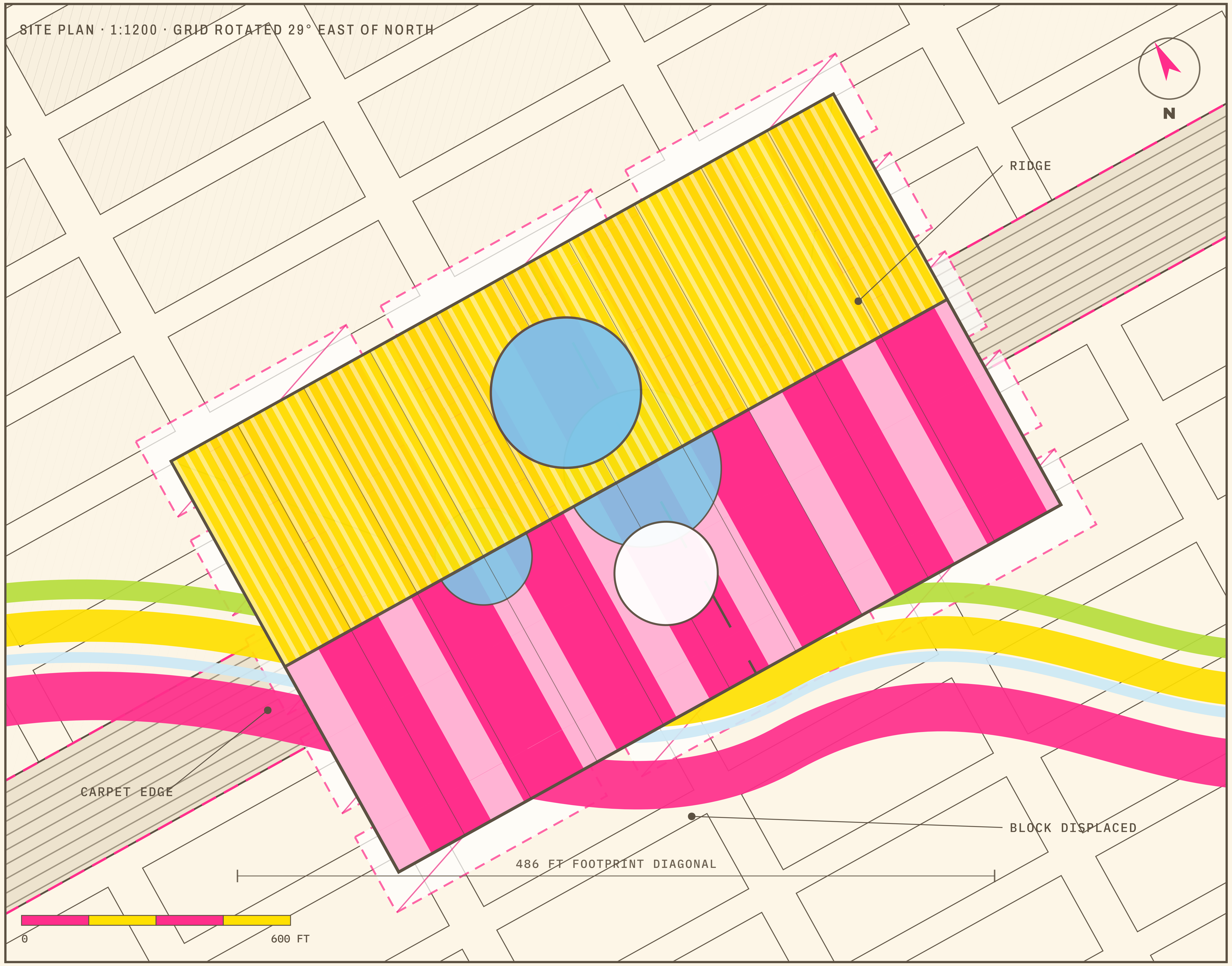
TWO OCULI OUTSTARE THE BILLBOARDS.

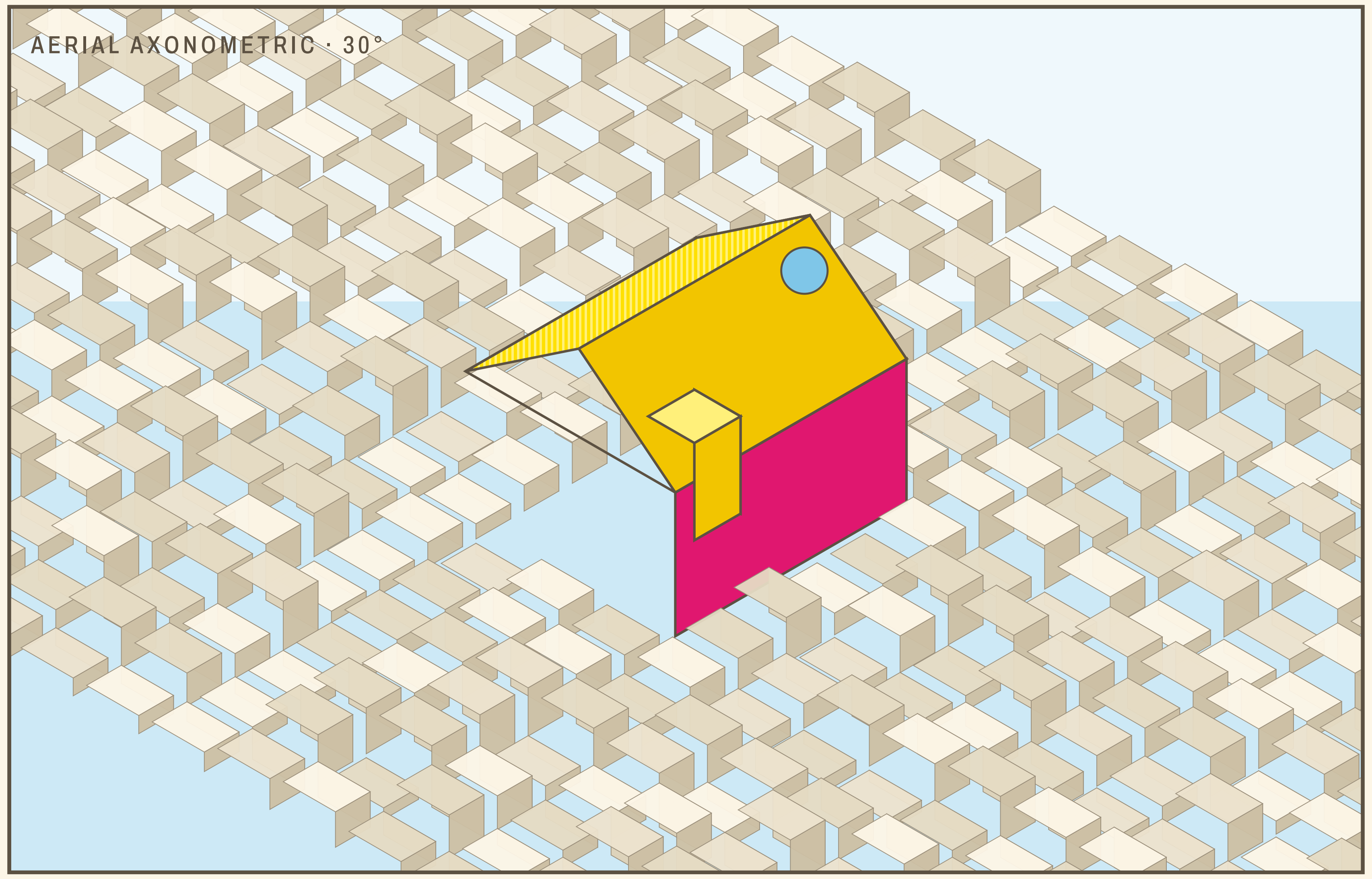
SSH-09 THE RAIL CUT

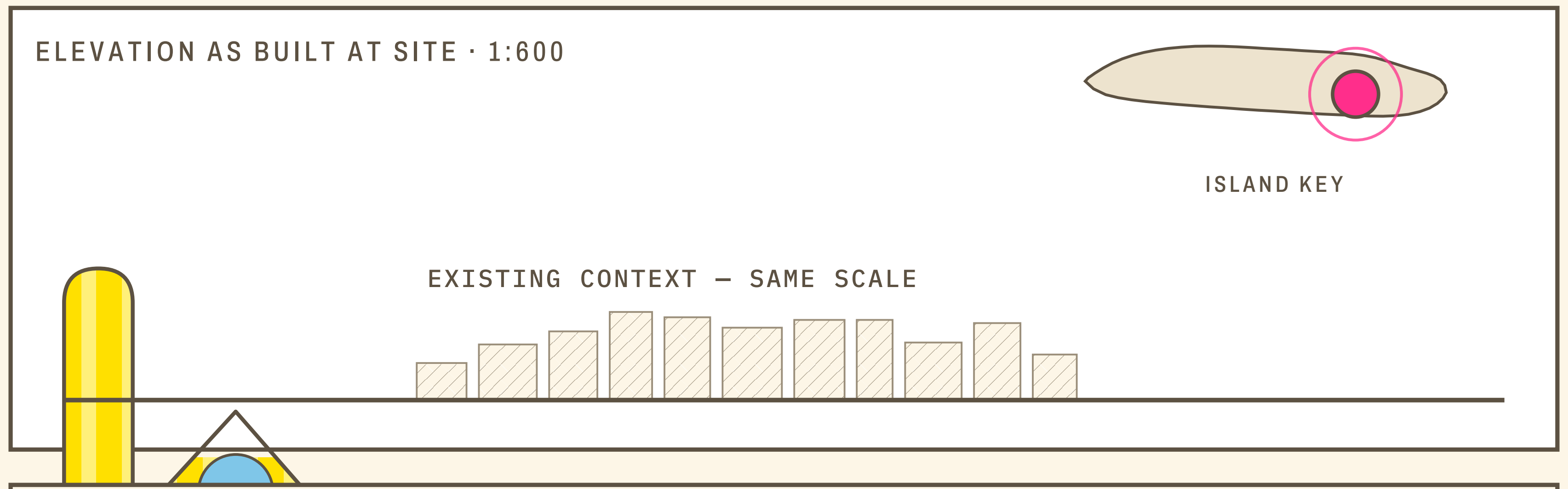
HUDSON YARDS · W 30 ST · HIGH LINE SPUR

SSH/F

PEDIMENT + DETACHED CHIMNEY







GROSS FLOOR AREA	236,000 SF
HEIGHT TO FINIAL	496 FT
CITY BLOCKS DISPLACED	8
STREET REFERENCE	ELEVENTH AV / W 30 ST
SUBWAY	7
EXISTING CONDITION	OPEN RAIL YARD / VIADUCT ELEVATION +30

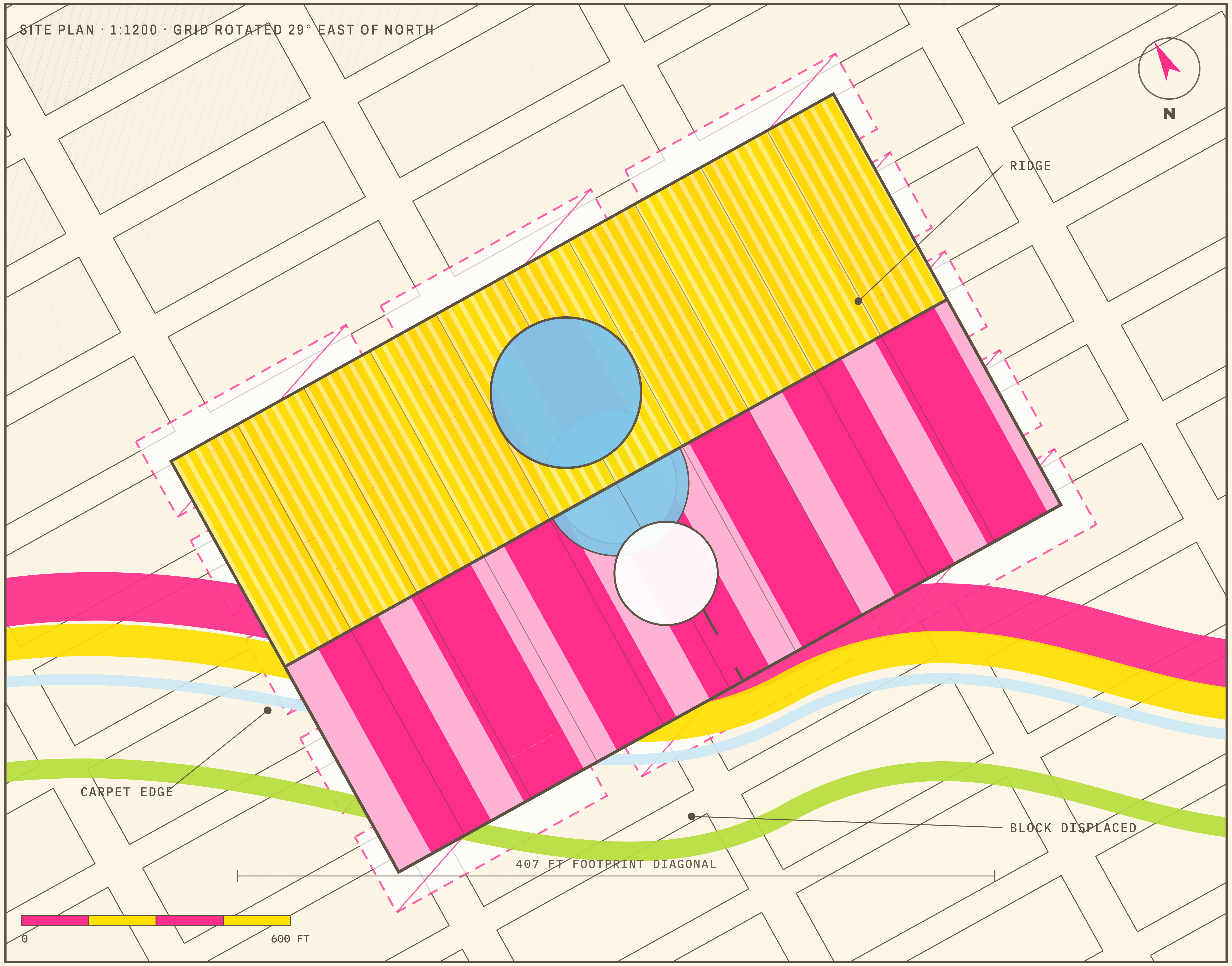
A CHIMNEY STANDS FREE ABOVE THE TRAINS.

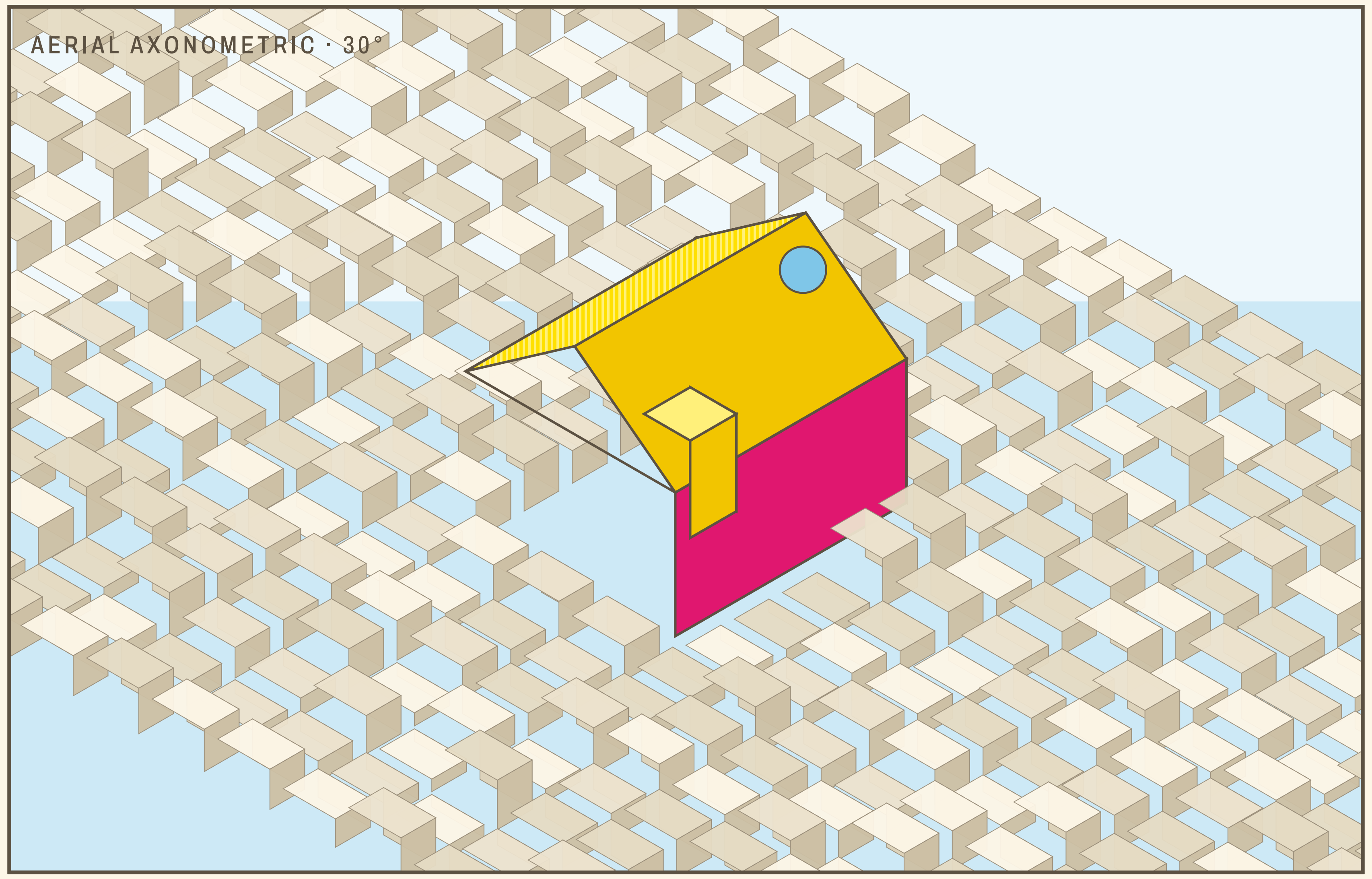
SSH-10 UNION SQUARE

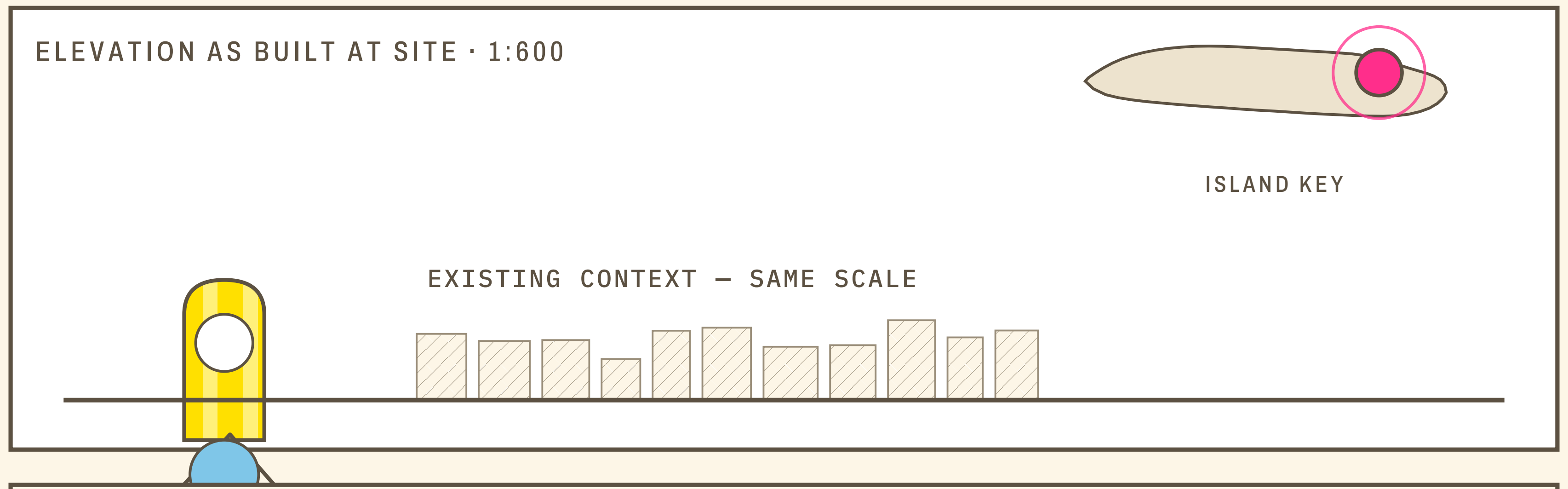
UNION SQUARE · E 14 ST · BROADWAY

SSH/A

GABLE + OFFSET OCULUS FINIAL







GROSS FLOOR AREA	166,000 SF
HEIGHT TO FINIAL	428 FT
CITY BLOCKS DISPLACED	5
STREET REFERENCE	BROADWAY / E 14 ST
SUBWAY	4 · 5 · 6 · L · N · Q · R · W
EXISTING CONDITION	GREENMARKET / FOUR DAYS A WEEK

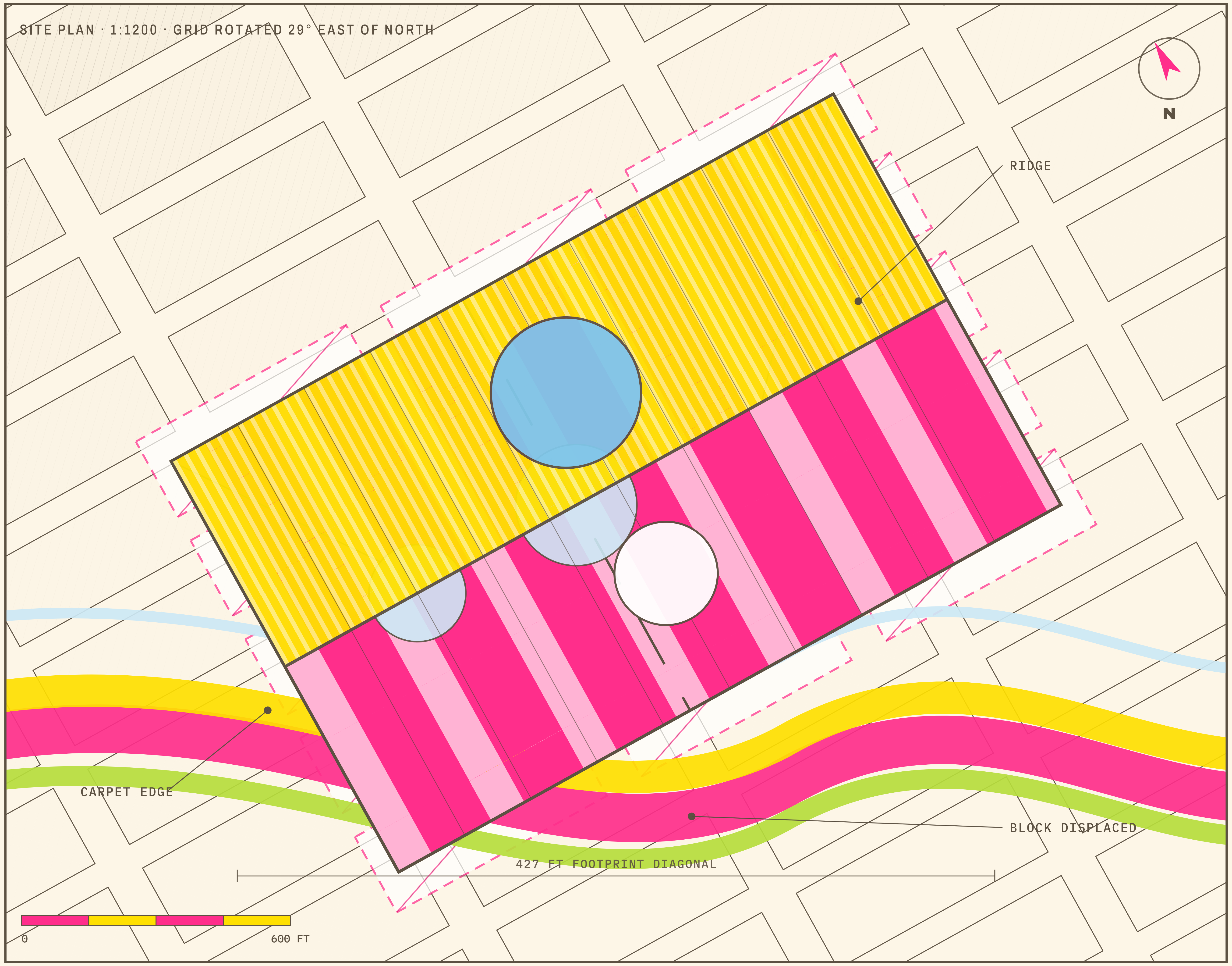
THE OLDEST SPEAKING PLACE GETS A ROOF.

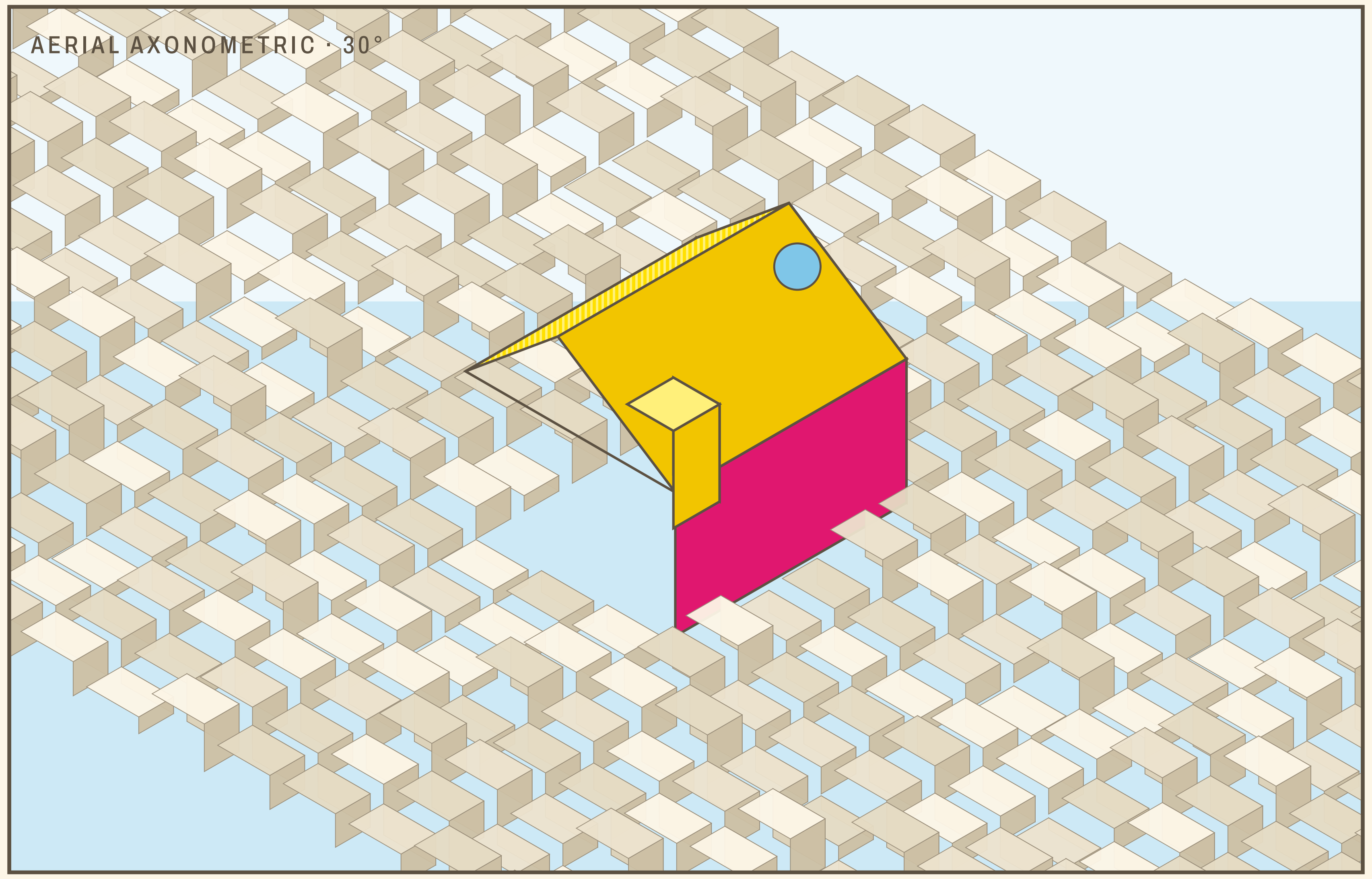
SSH-11 SEWARD

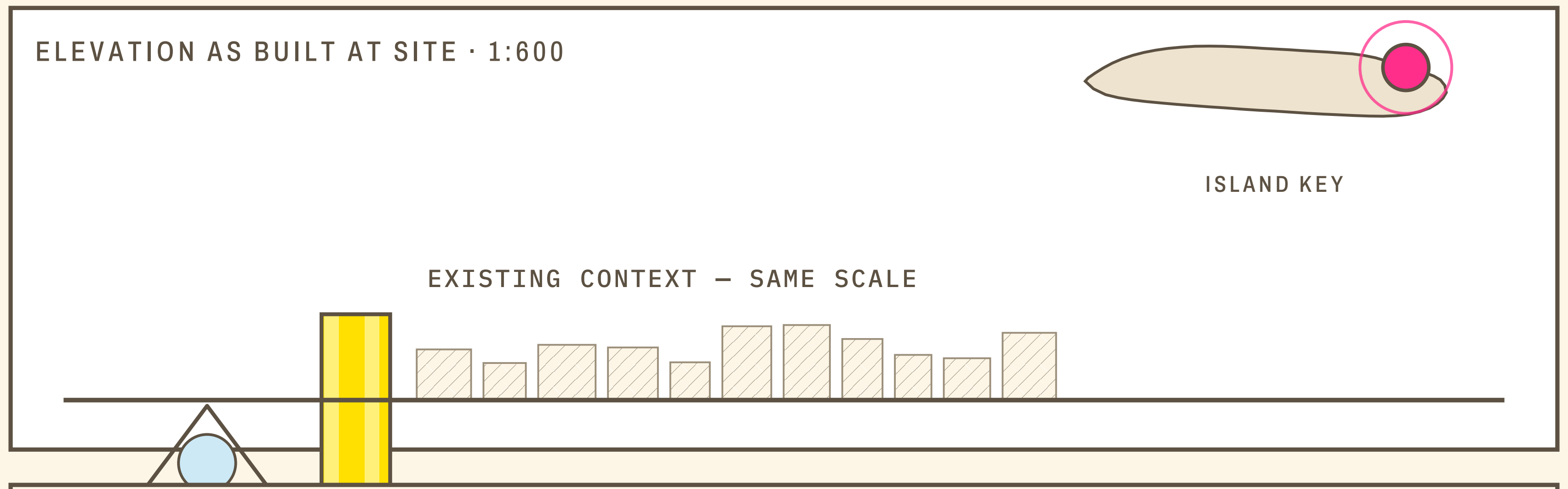
SEWARD PARK · ESSEX × CANAL · LES

SSH/G

ASYMMETRIC GABLE + OFFSET STACK







GROSS FLOOR AREA	182,000 SF
HEIGHT TO FINIAL	414 FT
CITY BLOCKS DISPLACED	6
STREET REFERENCE	ESSEX ST / CANAL ST
SUBWAY	F · J · M · Z
EXISTING CONDITION	FIRST MUNICIPAL PLAYGROUND IN THE U.S. · 1903

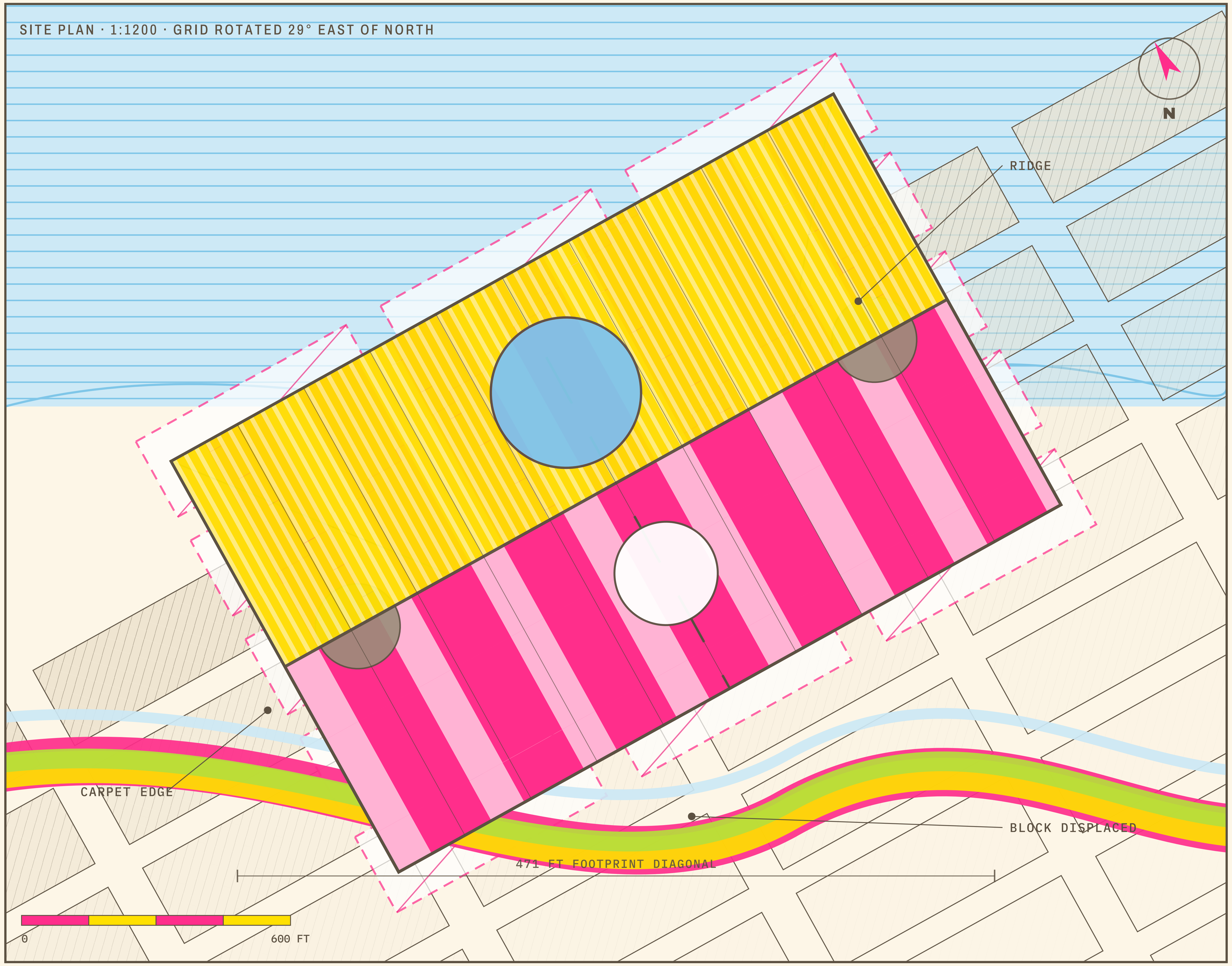
THE FIRST PLAYGROUND GETS ITS SECOND HOUSE.

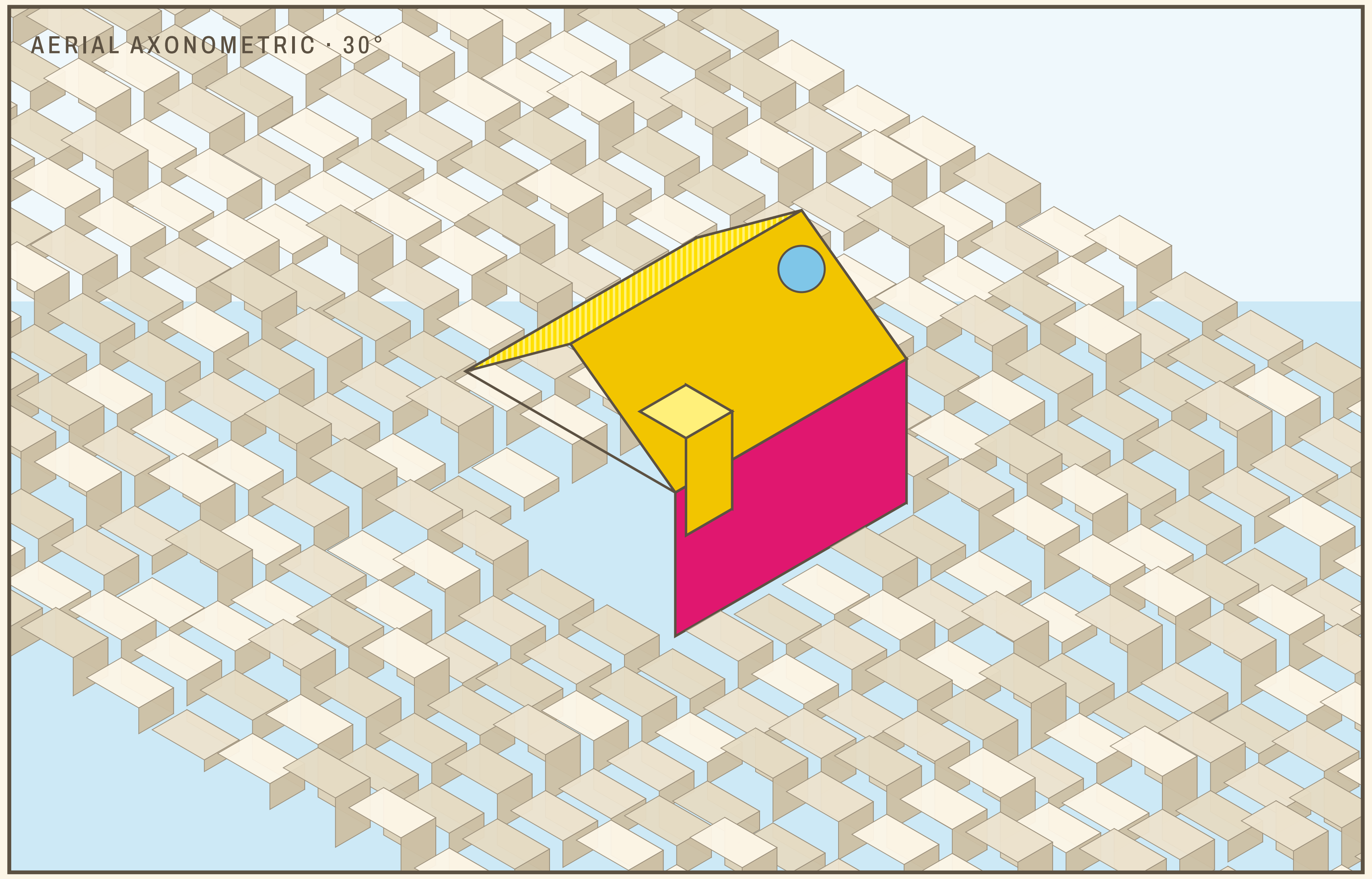
SSH-12 THE BATTERY

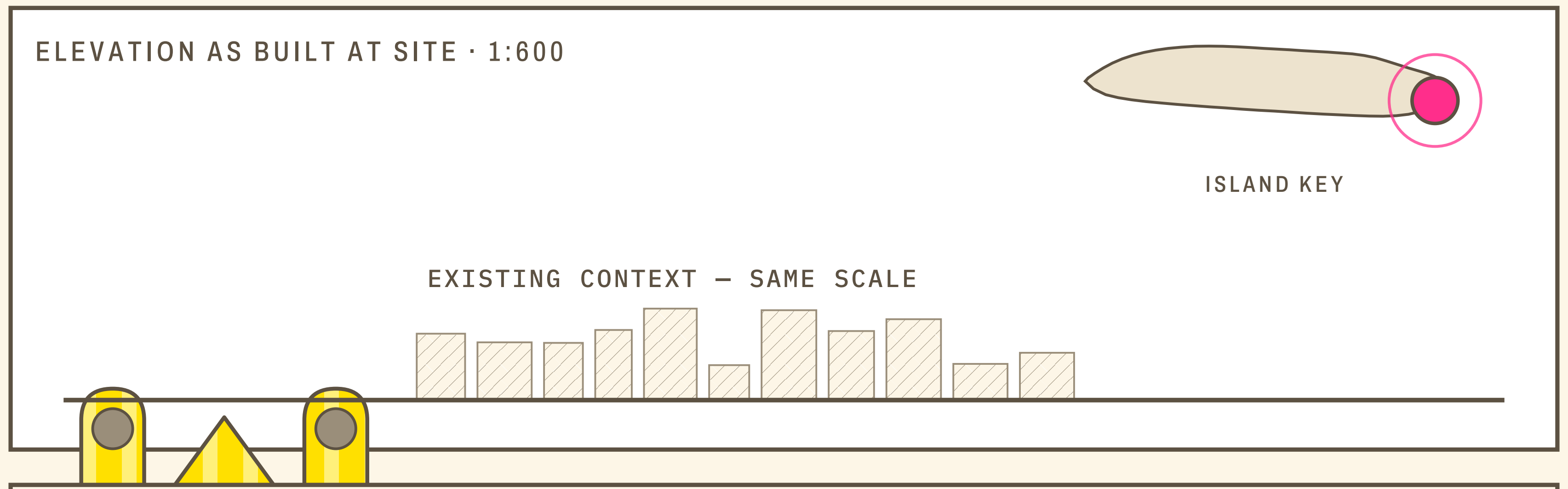
THE BATTERY · PIER A · HARBOR EDGE

SSH/I

SYMMETRIC GABLE + FLANKING ROUND STACKS





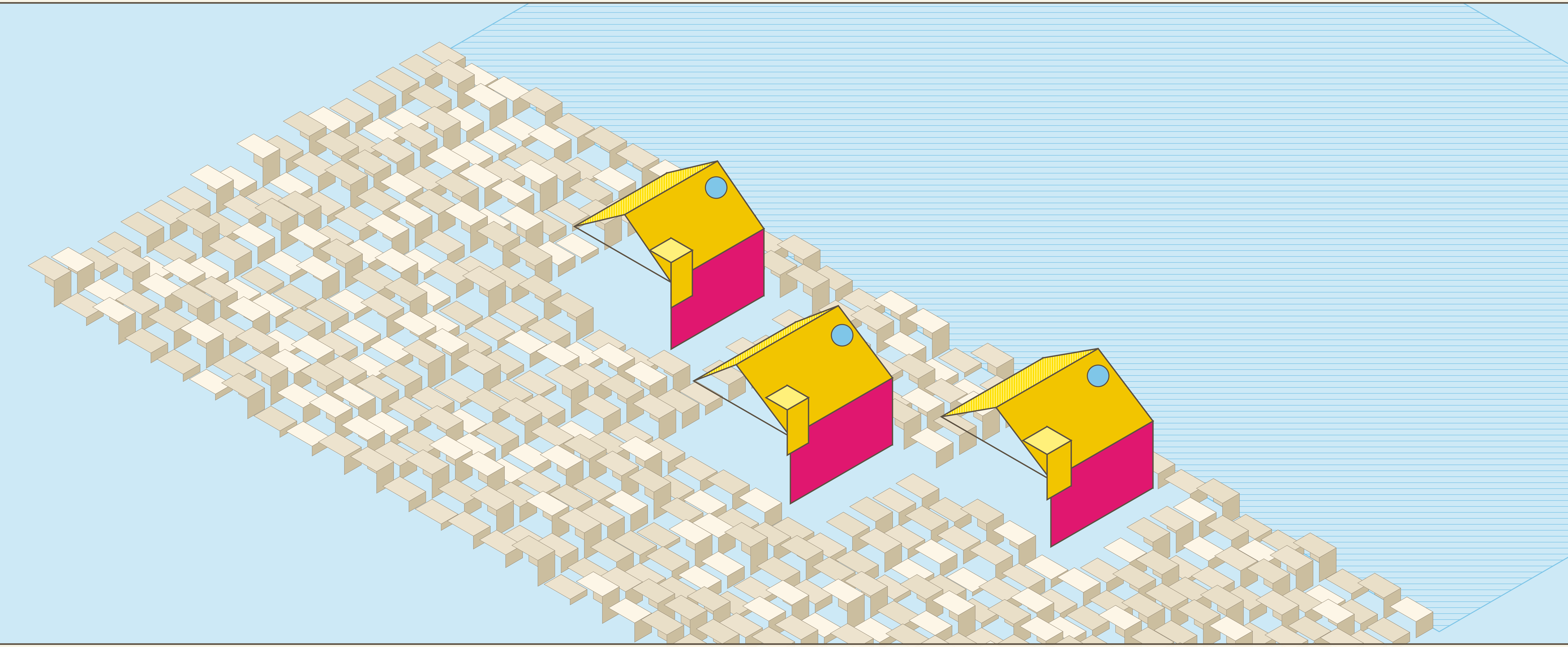


GROSS FLOOR AREA	222,000 SF
HEIGHT TO FINIAL	452 FT
CITY BLOCKS DISPLACED	7
STREET REFERENCE	STATE ST / BATTERY PL
SUBWAY	1 · 4 · 5 · R · W
EXISTING CONDITION	THE ISLAND ENDS / THE HARBOR BEGINS

THE LAST GABLE FACES THE OPEN WATER.

LOWER MANHATTAN AERIAL

SSH-10 UNION SQUARE · SSH-11 SEWARD · SSH-12 THE BATTERY



SSH-10
UNION SQUARE

SSH-11
SEWARD

SSH-12
THE BATTERY

THREE HOUSES BETWEEN FOURTEENTH STREET AND THE HARBOUR · VIEW FROM THE SOUTH-EAST

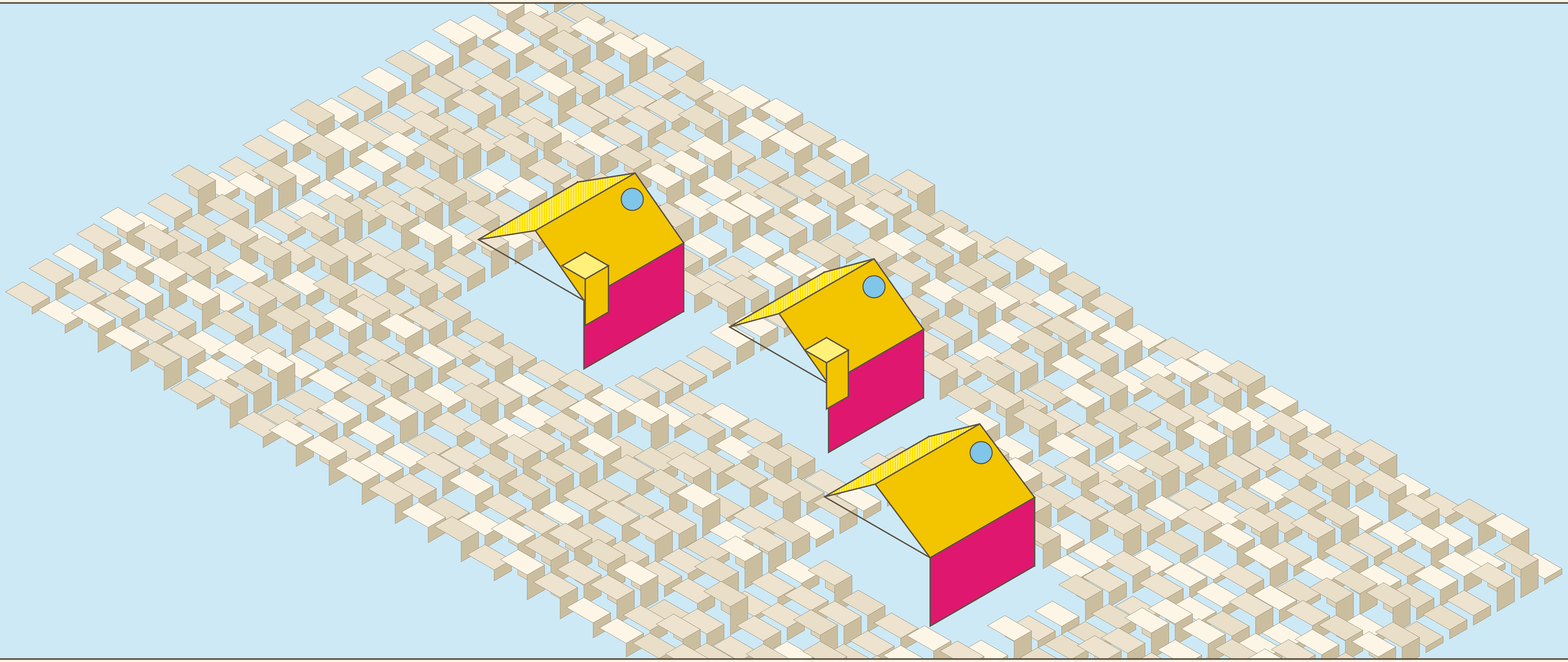
HOUSES AT SPECULATIVE SCALE

CONTEXT AT TRUE SCALE · 12 TO 86 FT

0 — 800 FT

MIDTOWN AERIAL

SSH-07 PARK AVENUE VIADUCT · SSH-08 THE BOWTIE · SSH-09 THE RAIL CUT



SSH-07
PARK AVENUE

SSH-08
THE BOWTIE

SSH-09
THE RAIL CUT

THE THREE MIDTOWN HOUSES STAND ABOVE A CONTEXT OF 12 TO 78 FEET

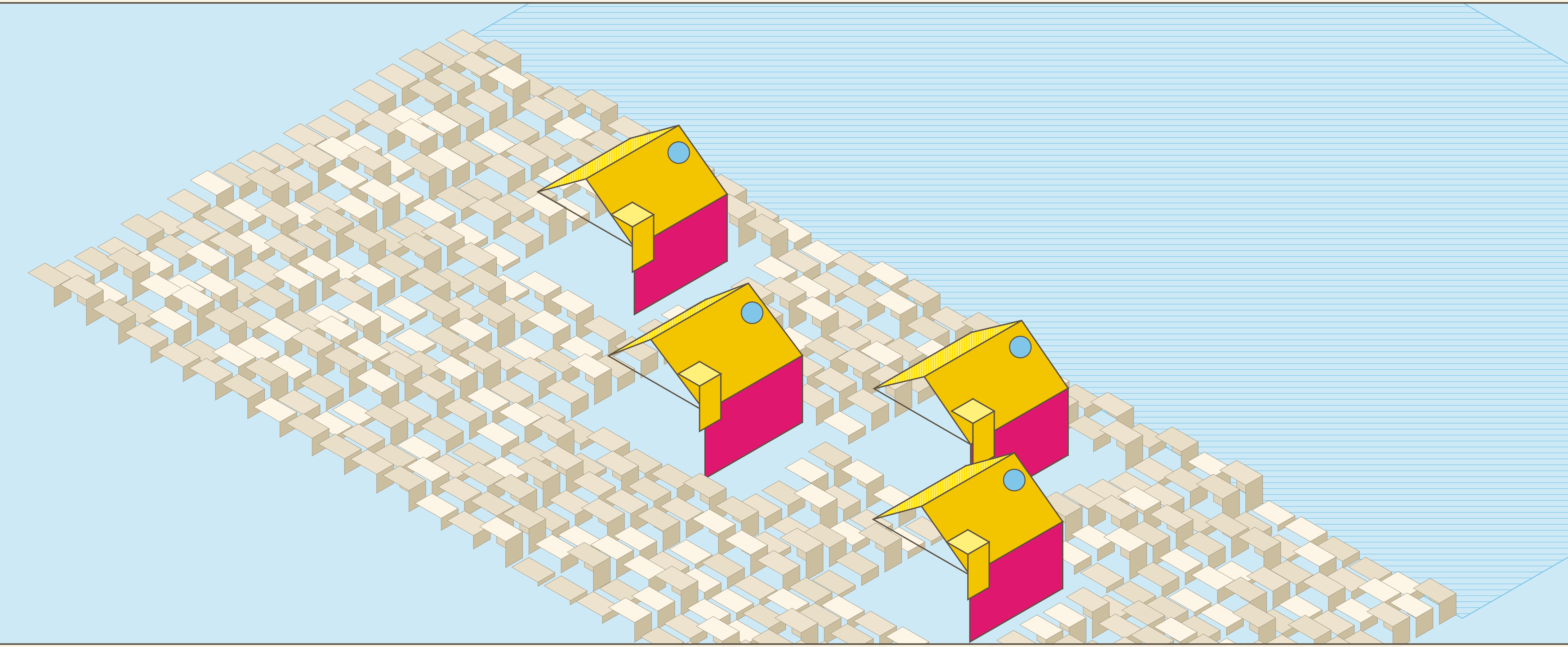
HOUSES AT SPECULATIVE SCALE

CONTEXT AT TRUE SCALE · 12 TO 86 FT

0 800 FT

UPPER MANHATTAN AERIAL

SSH-01 INWOOD · SSH-02 HIGH BRIDGE · SSH-03 MORNINGSIDE · SSH-04 GARVEY



SSH-01
INWOOD

SSH-02
HIGH BRIDGE

SSH-03
MORNINGSIDE

SSH-04
GARVEY

FOUR HOUSES NORTH OF 110TH STREET · THE GRID BREAKS AND THE HOUSES DO NOT

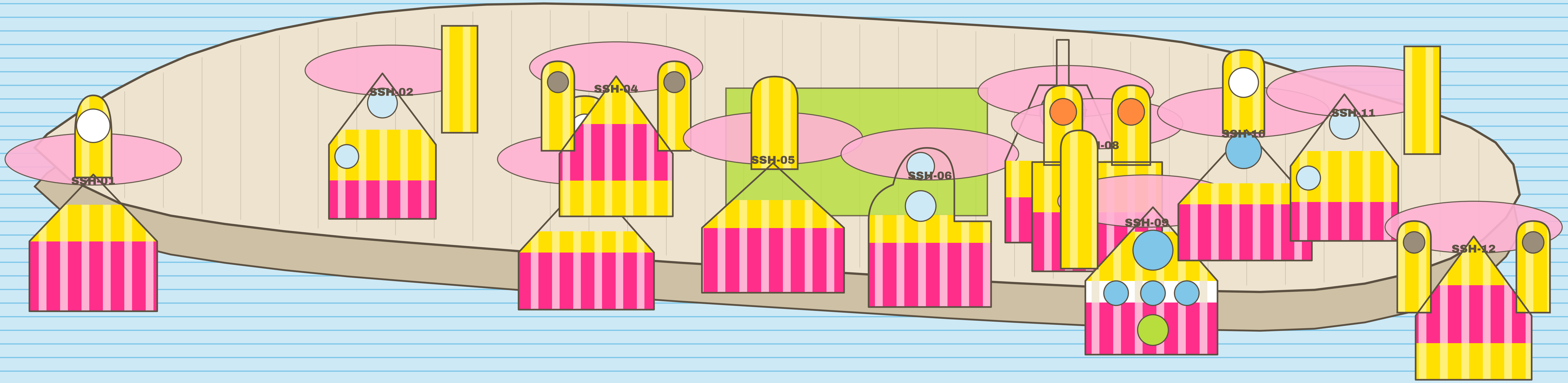
HOUSES AT SPECULATIVE SCALE

CONTEXT AT TRUE SCALE · 12 TO 86 FT

0
800 FT

THE ISLAND, OVERSCALED

TWELVE SUPER SCHOOL HOUSES SEEN TOGETHER FROM THE SOUTHEAST · NORTH AT LEFT



N

AT THIS SCALE THE HOUSES ARE THE SKYLINE. THE SKYLINE IS THE CURRICULUM.

SUPER SUPERGRAPHICS

NINE TYPOLOGIES · TWELVE SPECULATIVE PLACEMENTS · THIRTY PLATES

Published by SURJAN SUPER SCHOOL.
Composed by Surjan, with the aid of Claude.

Every plate is full-bleed landscape, 24 × 15 inches.
The permitted fields are chrome yellow, magenta, sky, meadow and warm taupe. No black is used anywhere in this volume — not in a rule, not in a letterform, not in a shadow. Where depth is required it is given by a deeper chroma of the same field, never by an absence of light.

The nine typologies are read from nine field photographs of a striped civic school and its flooded plaza. The twelve placements are speculative: they propose that a school for a city ought to be the size of the argument it makes. Footprints, heights and displaced-block counts are polemical, not permitted.

Precedent: Barbara Stauffacher Solomon at The Sea Ranch, 1964–66; Lance Wyman, Mexico City, 1968; Venturi Scott Brown Izenour, 1972; Deborah Sussman, Los Angeles, 1984. From Sussman the operative rule of this volume is taken — that a supergraphic is not merely big, it is bigger than the architecture.

THE HOUSE IS THE SIGN. THE SIGN IS THE CITY.